Vol. 24 No. 3 Autumn 2011

EAGLE Times

The Journal of the Eagle Society

EAGLE 29 May 1953

LUCK OF THE LEGION

CONTINUING

THE MALAGASY MASK

Sergeant 'Tough' Luck and Corporal Tremet are stationed at a jungle 'poste' in Madagascar. A mysterious mask, left before the main gate, is taken to the Commandant by Luck and Tremet who, having alerted the garrison, return to the Commandant's office for some information. Jungle drums can be heard beating all around.

YOU TWO HAVEN'T BEEN STATIONED HERE LONG, SO YOU WON'T KNOW ABOUT COLONEL JULES' PATROL, I SUPPOSE?

I'VE HEARD OF IT...

SO HAVE I. WHEN DID IT SET OUT — AND WHERE FROM?

STORY BY GEOFFREY BOND: DRAWN BY MARTIN AITCHISON

IT LEFT FROM THIS VERY 'POSTE', SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. EVERYTHING SEEMED TO BE GOING WELL — UNTIL YOU BROUGHT THIS CONFOUNDED MASK IN.

YOU MEAN, IT'S SOME FORM OF MESSAGE, SIR?

I THINK SO, SERGEANT. WE ARRANGED THAT IF JULES REQUIRED HELP HE SHOULD SEND BACK SOME SORT OF NATIVE ARTICLE, BY RUNNER.

SO THAT YOU'D KNOW ROUGHLY WHERE HE WAS BY STUDYING THE THING, BUT WITHOUT AROUSING SUSPICION AMONG POSSIBLE ENEMIES?

IN THAT CASE THE MASK'LL GIVE YOU HIS POSITION, WON'T IT, MON COMMANDANT?

REGION INCONNUE

I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE LIKE IT BEFORE! NOW, TAKE A LOOK AT THIS MAP...

SO THIS MAY BELONG TO A TRIBE WE'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF! WHERE WERE THEY BOUND FOR, SIR?

IF THIS IS A TRAP, I'LL... OH NO, THE POOR CHAP'S ALL IN.

THE MOST NORTHERLY 'POSTE' ON THE ISLAND. COLONEL JULES' IDEA WAS TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE INTERIOR PEOPLES EN ROUTE. HE KNEW THE RISK, BUT HE IS A BRAVE MAN.

WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE?

I'LL SEE THIS MAN HAS FOOD AND REST WHEN YOU'VE SPOKEN TO HIM, SIR.

SERGEANT — THOSE DRUMS HAVE STOPPED!

CONTINUED

REMEMBERING BRITAIN'S NATIONAL PICTURE STRIP WEEKLY - EAGLE, 1950 - 1969

EAGLE Times

Vol 24 No 3 Autumn 2011

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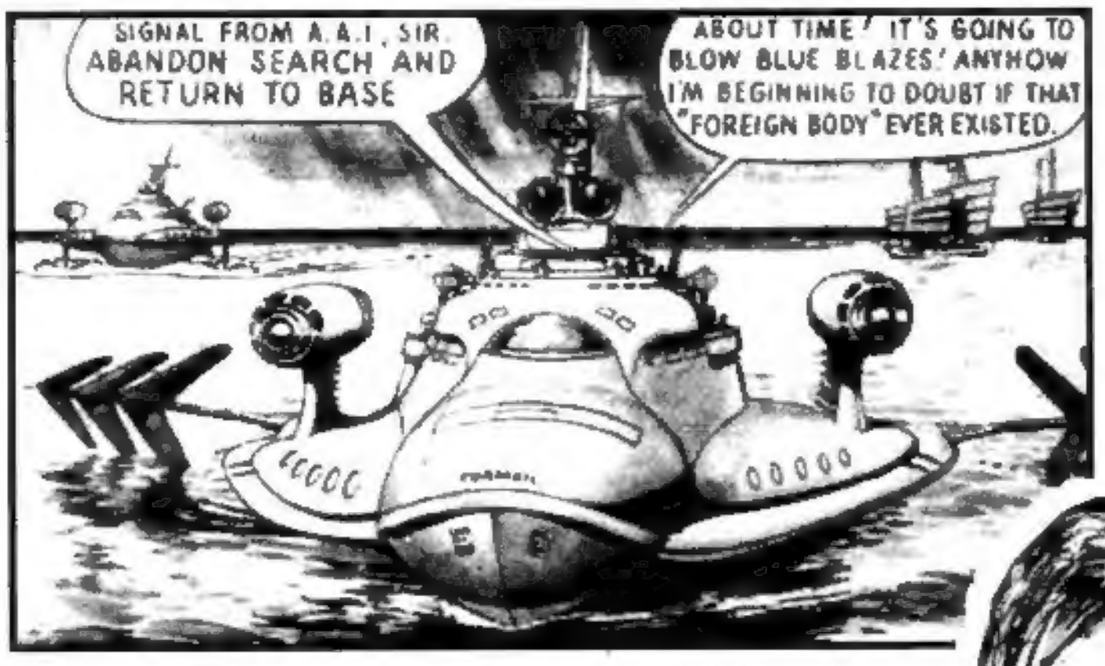
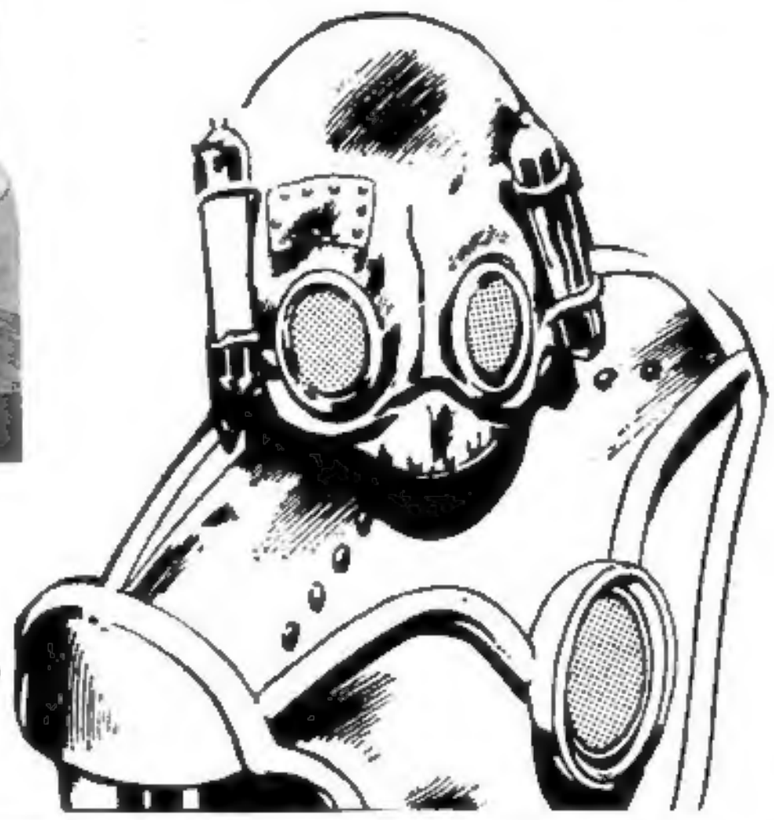

SIGNAL FROM A.A.I., SIR. ABANDON SEARCH AND RETURN TO BASE
ABOUT TIME! IT'S GOING TO BLOW BLUE BLAZES! ANYHOW I'M BEGINNING TO DOUBT IF THAT "FOREIGN BODY" EVER EXISTED.

The XCH-4 Hydrofoil (Hampson-style)

Leslie Ashwell Wood

The Frightened Flower Girl



"Kettle" - the Electrobot

Luck of the Legion

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The quarterly journal of the *Eagle Society.*

The *Society* is dedicated to the memory of Britain's National picture strip Weekly - ***EAGLE***.

Hello again,

For this issue we have some good news, some sad news and some bad news.

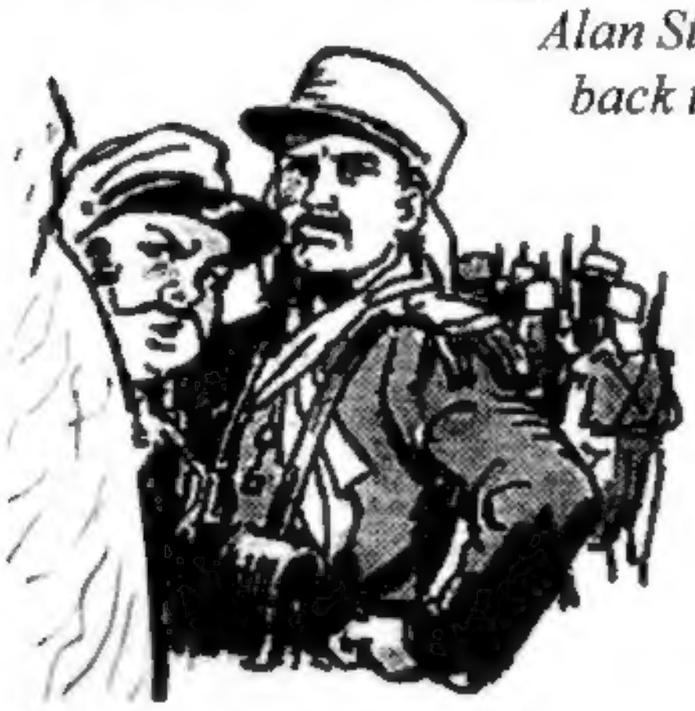
The good news is that after many years of searching for a publisher, Charles Chilton has at last found one to take his autobiography. The book, ***Auntie's Charlie*** *went on sale on 20th August, published by Fantom Films. Not only have they put out this book but they are also reprinting Charles' Journey into Space trilogy. More details within in a report on the book launch from Will Grenham.*

The sad news is that Geoff Provins was found dead in his bungalow in Aylesbury on 25th July. Geoff had been a true ***Eagler*** *through and through, for many years. He subscribed to many of the* ***Eagle*** *fanzines down the decades and was a visitor to many of the* ***Eagle*** *week-ends and social gatherings. His biggest claim to fame was an illustration of Dan and Jocelyn in the 1987 Dan Dare Annual. For* ***Eagle Times*** *he was a regular contributor to the Postbag pages. To Geoff' s family we offer our heartfelt condolences on the loss of a family member, who was a valued member of the* ***Eagle Society****.*

The bad news is that for 2012 we must increase the subscription to ***Eagle Times****. Although recently our previously diminishing membership numbers have increased to what we had a few years ago, this has been insufficient to cover cost increases that have also occurred: principally paper and postal charges. Next year printing costs will also increase. The current subscription does not cover the cost of producing and distributing four issues to every member, and the magazine has only been able to survive by encouraging early subscriptions to the next year, and the sale of back issues. We are a not for profit enterprise, but we need to return the magazine to a more secure financial footing. Consequently, the 2012 subscription to* ***Eagle Times*** *will be £27 for UK subscribers and £38 for non-UK subscribers. This still represents value for money: a 56-page A4 magazine, much of it in colour, with no subsidy from advertising, delivered to your door (in UK) for £6.75 a copy. However, to encourage early re-subscription we can offer, as in previous years, a modest discount for "early bird" subscribers, whose cheques are received before December 31st, 2011. Details are in the Supplement.*

For this issue we feature an ***Eagle*** *character who hasn't featured a lot in* ***Eagle Times*** *and that is Sergeant Luck of the French Foreign Legion. We have had an analysis of other characters in the past such as Dan Dare, Storm Nelson, Tommy Walls and Jack o'Lantern but now the Sergeant comes under the microscope. Several members have said he was their favourite character in* ***Eagle*** *and our guest at the Salisbury Dinner in 2006, Col. Tony Kingaby, said it was this strip that caused him to join the army. But he also said that the strip didn't give the unpleasant side of military life in the jungles, such as the biting insects, scorpions etc.!*

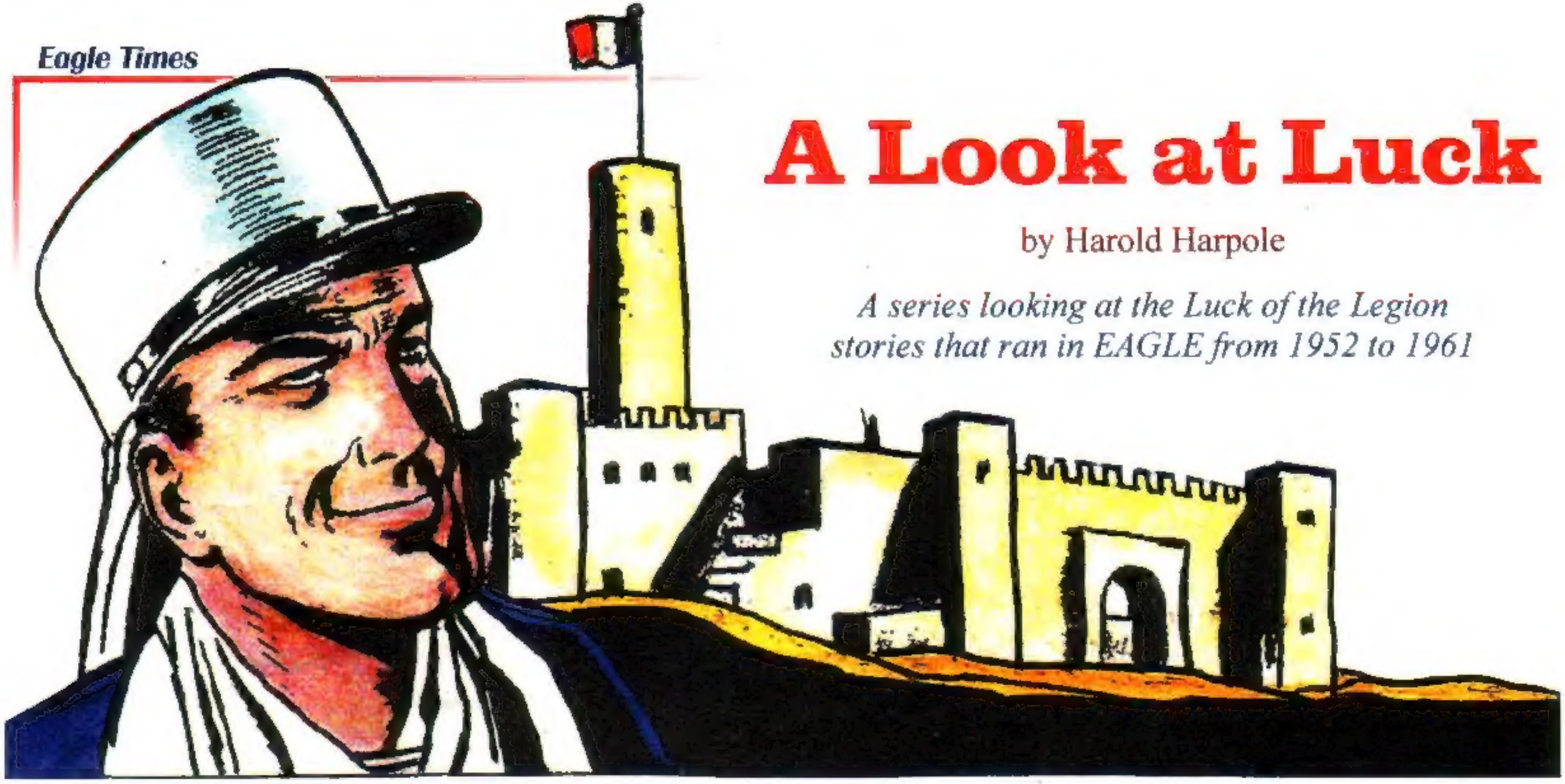
A most amazing find has come to us thanks to Derek Wilson. Derek has found out that the hydrofoil featured in 'The Man From Nowhere' was in fact based on an actual ship. All details within, along with a new PC49 story based on the drug problems of London in the fifties. We tend to think that drugs are a recent problem but Alan Stranks gave us a flavour of this criminal activity way back then.



Hope you enjoy our efforts

Best Wishes

'The Team'



A Look at Luck

by Harold Harpole

A series looking at the Luck of the Legion stories that ran in EAGLE from 1952 to 1961

First, for new readers, some background as to how Sergeant Luck made his way into *EAGLE*'s centre pages. During 1951 Marcus Morris and Ellen Vincent wanted something different in the centre of *EAGLE*. Humour strips such as 'Skippy the Kangaroo', 'The Lincoln Imp' and 'Tintin' had gone before and were not a great success, so it was time for some solid adventure.

Their feelings were made known to several literary agents and Max Kester, who represented Geoffrey Bond, passed on the *EAGLE*'s requirements to him. Geoffrey thought long and hard about a subject suitable for *EAGLE*. He turned over several subjects – pirates, soldiers, explorers etc.; all went through his mind – and he finally came up with a story about the French Foreign Legion as there was nothing around in any of the other boys' papers on this subject.

One wet Saturday afternoon Geoffrey went to Putney reference library and waded through books on the Legion. He envisaged an Englishman who wanted to forget his past and a good way to do this was to join the Legion. Luck's past was never detailed in the strip and neither was his Christian name divulged.

Geoffrey put together a synopsis and sent it to Marcus Morris who read it, liked it, and promptly filed it away. For some months it was forgotten until the 'Tintin' story was coming to an end and the question of what to replace it with was under discussion. Marcus remembered the Bond script and after finding it he put wheels in motion to produce the strip.

An artist was wanted; someone who could face up to the gruelling deadlines and maintain the quality of artwork in the rest of the *EAGLE*. Martin Aitchison was suggested as he had done one or two things for Hulton's juvenile papers. When approached he agreed and contracts were signed. For a reference Martin went to see the film *Ten Tall Men*, a film starring Burt Lancaster as Sgt. Mike Kincaid of the French Foreign Legion. He noted the uniforms in the film, and the main character (Luck) he based on the Duke of Edinburgh, a face that at least one other *EAGLE* artists used in their strips.

As the strip went across the centre of *EAGLE*'s pages, Martin drew it on two artboards; a left side and a right side, making the break in an appropriate spot between the frames. This was not always the same place each week.

EAGLE dated 9th March, 1952, had a front page banner exclaiming "Thrilling New Foreign Legion Story Starts Today" and sure enough there was episode one in the centre underneath an Ashwell Wood cutaway of the BOAC Comet.

The first frame sets the scene: the H.Q. of the legion in the North African desert. Corporal Luck, an Englishman, is summoned to the Commanding Officer's office to be told he has been promoted to Sergeant. This is a good thing, as "Corporal Luck" wouldn't have had the same ring as "Sergeant Luck".

Our hero is told to take a company to relieve the desert Fort of El Razin and Luck sets about putting the company together. He summons a very young looking Corporal Trenet (who has no moustache in the early episodes) and the two round up the legionnaires. On hearing they are going to Fort El Razin there is much mumbling among the men. The fort is reputed to be haunted!

Luck "rubbishes" this idea and, as the men line up, he makes it quite clear he wants no more talk of haunted forts. But, after the long march through the desert, when the fort is sighted something is wrong!

What is it? Find out next week.

So what do we make of the first episode? Not a bad start in my opinion. The scene is set well and we have a mystery straight away. It's also interesting to note Luck's face. In these early episodes he has an oval chin but as the series moves on his chin becomes more square.

Episode two adds to the mystery as the fort is totally unmanned. Where is the garrison? The plot gets more eerie as during the night a ghostly "Lost Garrison" is seen marching through the desert from one side of the fort while on the other side a legionnaire is beckoned by a ghostly lone form. The soldier approaches the figure but is shot and, while most of the fort sleeps during the night, the "Lost Garrison" invades the fort, capturing Luck and his men.

It becomes apparent that the "Lost Garrison" are in fact Riffs in Legion uniforms and the trussed up company of Luck's is then obliged to walk for two days to a Riff town behind the mountains.

The Sergeant is then required to attend a meeting with the Riff leader Selem Raschid who wants information from Luck as to the strength of the Legion in the area.

In typical stiff upper lip fashion, Luck will give nothing away and so a large negro is brought out to torture him with a red-hot poker. After half an hour Luck faints and is taken to a cell that contains Corporal Trenet.

Luck faces the torturer in EAGLE

Later the couple overpower their jailer and Trenet changes into his clothes. The plan is to reach the other captured men so looking like a Riff jailer with his prisoner, they set off across town. The plan works and the two men are reunited with their men.

Once again the jailer is overthrown and the legionnaires prepare to break out, but first Luck climbs out of the roof to weigh up the situation. Here he sees a couple of Riffs setting up a machine gun just below him. He must stop them and dives from his rooftop position on top of the two Riffs who are dispatched with a number of punches.

As the legionnaires escape, Trenet joins the sergeant on the roof but is shot by a couple of Riffs. Luck sorts the couple out with more punches, jumps down from the roof and makes his way to Salem Raschid's palace. Whilst hiding, Luck overhears the Riffs' plans and decides to escape to tell the Legion. He comes across a lone horse and leaps up on its back and away.

Off into the desert he rides but the hot sun takes its toll; first his eyes go and then both horse and man collapse through lack of water.

It's a travelling caravan that finds the unconscious bodies of Luck and his horse. He is nursed back to good health but he doesn't realise that the men in the caravan are not travellers but Selem Raschid's men. The Sergeant then gives his horse a kick and makes an attempt to outrun the caravan but his horse is shot from under him and he is recaptured.

Taken back to a Riff oasis, Luck is put with the missing garrison from El Razin. From the captured men he learns that they are being used to build a railway for the Riffs.

The torturer in the book Carry on Sergeant Luck

The following day, when the prisoners are working on the railway, a sand storm blows up and the Legionnaires take advantage to overrun their captors. The oasis comes under the control of the Legion and Luck captures Selem Raschid.

He then plans to take a small party back to Raschid's city to rescue his own company after the Arab gives his word that he will guide the company back the correct way.

On approaching the city, Raschid offers to go alone into the city and tell his men to surrender - but when allowed to do this he double-crosses Luck and the Arabs fire on the Legionnaires. They are forced back to the oasis, which comes under siege. Luck realises that their position is hopeless and surrenders.

Raschid's plan is to torch the oasis with the Legionnaires inside it, which he does. However, a passing relief column sees the fire and moves in to investigate. The Riffs are sent packing by the column and the men in the burning oasis are rescued. When Luck meets the corporal in charge of the relief column he discovers it is Trenet, now complete with a moustache. When wounded in the first episodes he apparently lay doggo until the fight had gone away and then escaped.

So that was the first story. Readers research had given the new series the thumbs up so another story was written.

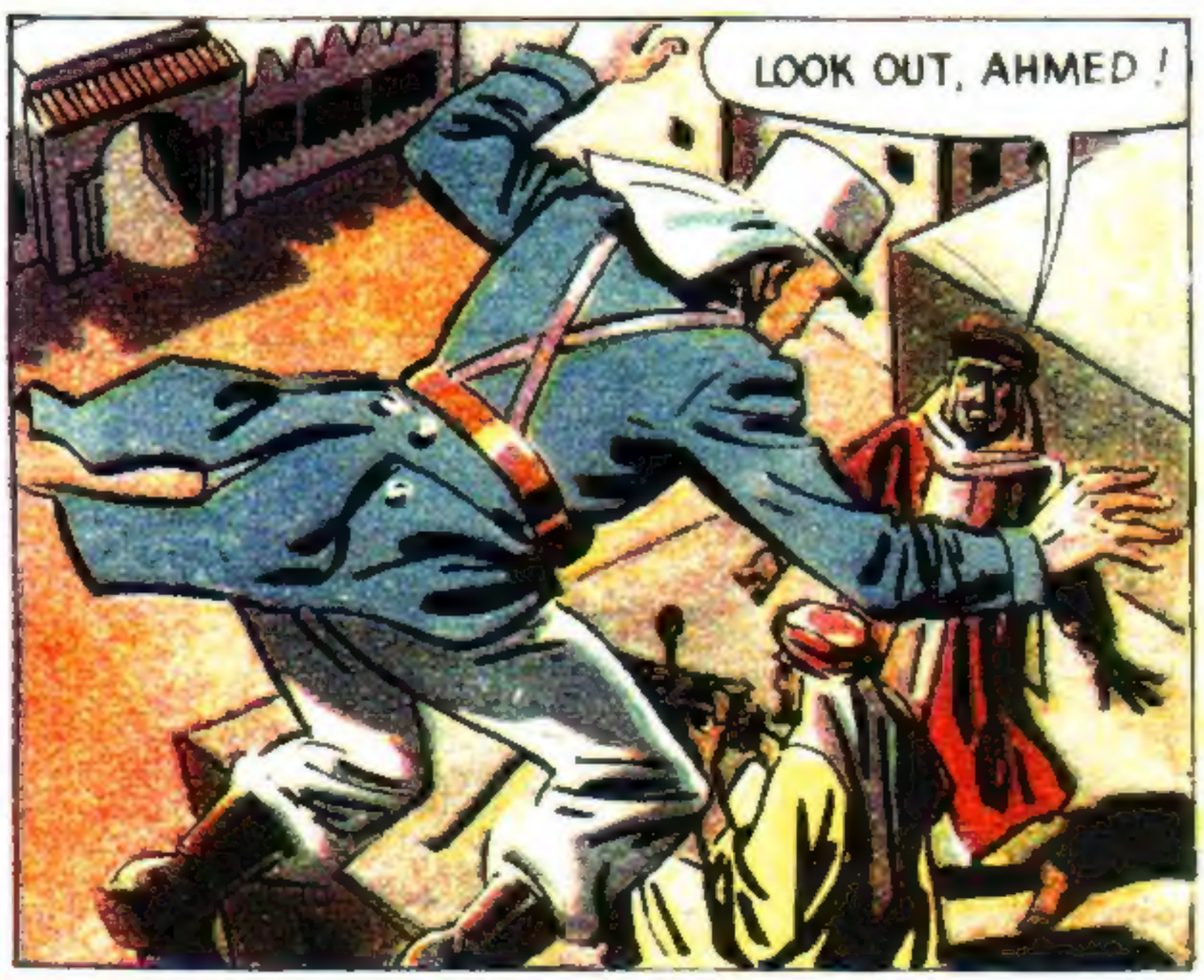
The above story was printed as a book in 1957 called *Carry on Sergeant Luck* and published by Hutchinson. Cyril Holloway did the cover illustration and the frontispiece. Geoffrey Bond and Holloway had worked together before on *EAGLE*'s half pager: 'For Bravery' during 1954/5.

The second story had a very eerie title: 'Death By The Dawn'. It started in *EAGLE* dated 24th October, 1952. How many other *EAGLE* stories had "Death" in the title?

The story kicks off in the C.O.s office in Algiers, North Africa, where a disturbance in Jedra is under discussion.

Under Capitaine Duval and Lieutenant Etienne, Sergeant Luck is asked to take a company to Jedra and investigate. But as the talks come to an end, a Legion bayonet crashes through the window with a message attached to the handle. Basically it says "Keep out of Jedra or you will meet death by the dawn." A good first episode!

Luck surprises the Arabs - from the book Carry on Sergeant Luck and, below, from EAGLE



The men chosen for the expedition bed down for the night but Luck finds he can't sleep. He remembers something that Trenet said before bedding down, "I'm for bed, Sergeant if we are to be up tomorrow before the dawn!"

The Sergeant then takes a gamble. He parades the men before the dawn outside the fort. As they stand at ease and dawn breaks the fort explodes. Luck was right: El Fagr (The Dawn) has struck.

The company marches to the coast and board the troop ship that will take them to Jedra. Luck and Trenet wander about the ship and notice that one of the lifebelts has the name 'El Fagr' on it. Luck has the feeling of being watched and in the final frame two evil eyes are indeed watching!

The following morning the Sergeant knocks on the Capitaine's cabin door but gets no answer. Opening the door he discovers the cabin empty and reports to the Lieutenant his fears that the Capitaine may have been thrown overboard. The Lieutenant thinks over Luck's theory and later has Luck arrested on suspicion that he may be 'El Fagr.'

The lifebelt that Luck reported seeing the name 'El Fagr' on can't be found.

Luck spends the night in the ship's cell but the final frame of the episode sees a dark shadow wandering about the decks vowing to kill the Lieutenant.

In the next episode, Luck, from his cell, hears a splash during the night and in the morning Etienne is missing, presumed drowned. The Sergeant is released and is now in command but as the officers are being picked off from the top, he reasons that he would be next in line. With this in mind he sets a trap. His bed is made to look as if it has a person sleeping in it. An extra pillowcase and coconut are moulded to make the deception.

Sure enough, that night, an Arab enters Luck's cabin and stabs the pillowcase. Luck springs at him but he is covered in grease and slips away only to jump overboard. Luck jumps in after him but finds no sign of the fugitive and is helped back on board.

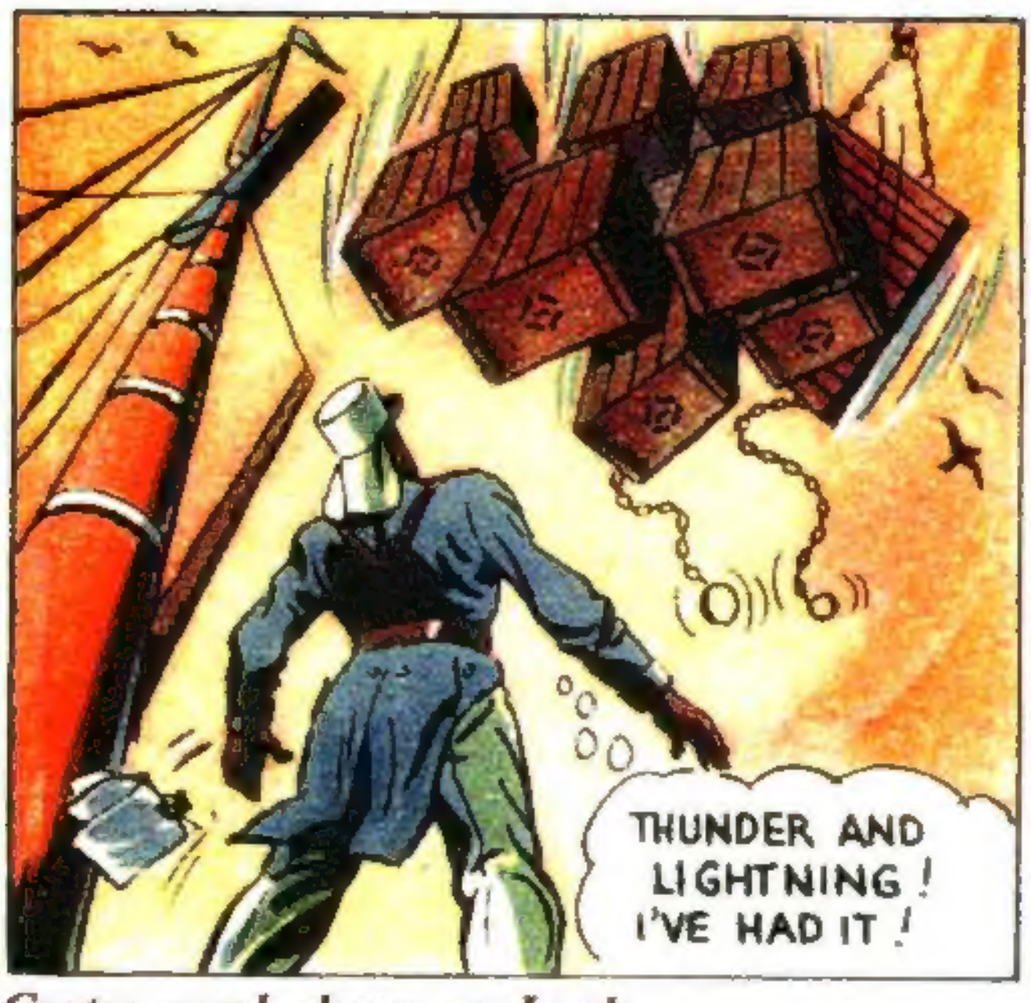
The ship finally reaches Beirut in Syria and supplies are unloaded. Luck is directing operations when a craneload of cases breaks away and the Sergeant is right under it! Has the Legionnaire been killed? Find out next week.

Just as in the Saturday morning serials at the cinema, in the next episode we find that Luck jumped out of the way just as the wooden cases crashed to the deck.

With supplies unloaded, the company board a train to Damascus and relax on the journey but danger awaits them when the train driver spots something on the line ahead. What is it? Answer, next week.

The Christmas *EAGLE* of 1952 has the answer. Up on the line in front a bridge carrying the track across a ravine has been blown up! The train screeches to a halt just before the damaged track is reached. The Legionnaires examine the damage and decide they haven't the time to return to Beirut and so will try to get everyone over to the other side by balancing themselves on the twisted track that is still intact over the ravine. Luck is the first to attempt a crossing lying flat and using a hand and a boot on each rail. For a breathtaking moment he slips and dangles by his hands, but Trenet scoots across and gives the Sergeant a hand-up. Once on the other side they decide that Trenet will supervise the crossing while Luck goes on ahead to spy out the land.

The well-known figure of the fat and lazy Bimberg appears in the early stories, though not in



Crates crash down on Luck

Will he survive?

name. His first appearance is in frame 3, 24th December, 1952. As the legionnaires clamber across the twisted railway track, a Bimberg type makes his unsteady trip across the ravine. He is complete with curly moustache and crumpled kepi.

All legionnaires safely across, they wait for Luck's return. Once again the Bimberg character is shown sleeping while the others stand to attention.

Finally the Sergeant returns and decides to take a short cut by marching south-south-east and not using the train line as El Fagr could be waiting at the end of the line. For hours they march but coming through a pass they are shot at. Luck determines there can't be many gunmen and orders his men to fire above where the bullets are coming from and onto the rocks above. The ricocheting bullets do the business and the company are then able to move on to Jedra.

In the City a messenger has bad news for the big noise in the city, Lord Suleiman Ben Hadj: the Legion are advancing! But Ben Hadj decides to give his visitors a royal welcome. A sniper has other ideas, eyes up the Sergeant in his gunsight, but is stopped just in time.

Luck and Trenet are taken to see the Emir who spells out the local problems. El Fagr is known about but no one knows who he is. As they are shown around, one of the Emir's sentries is attacked and murdered. .

A plan is drawn up. Legionnaires will patrol outside the city and stop anyone looking suspicious coming into or going out of the city. Luck and Trenet wander about the city taking in the atmosphere and come across a young boy who says he can take the legionnaires to someone who knows who El Fagr is. The Sergeant can't wait to be told by the old man, but coffee must be served first! Too late they realise the coffee is poisoned. The old man dies without giving his information.

The days go by and killings still happen. Arms are confiscated but how do guns get into the city? Luck is baffled and then he takes inspiration from something Trenet says. Are moles bringing them in?

The Sergeant thinks of an underground river and starts a search throughout the city. A pit is discovered with a ladder leading downwards. Where does it go? Next week's instalment will tell us. Investigations do in fact reveal an underground river and the mystery of the guns is solved . Luck and a small party , including the Bimberg look-alike, sail up the river and come out by some lost relics of a Roman site.

While investigating the site the legionnaires are captured by a band of Druses who tell them that they knew the soldiers were coming by messages from homing pigeons. They are then marched to see the chief who turns out to be a fair-minded head of the tribe. He offers Luck a deal. If he will duel with his best wrestler and win, he is free to go. Luck accepts and being our hero naturally he wins!

Back to the city and a meeting with the Emir, but alas he has been kidnapped by El Fagr! Luck starts a search but as he does so a young lad from the tribe where the wrestling match took place rides in to say the chief has been captured by El Fagr for letting Luck and his men go. The company set off to see what can be done.

They find the tribe's tents ransacked and the old chief lying staked to the ground but alive. He says he will move his tribe further out into the plains and be ready for El Fagr. The Legionnaires march back to Jedra where they are told of a mysterious horseman who has been trying to break through the cordon around the city over several nights.

Luck decides to lie in wait and when the horseman is sighted a flare is thrown. It reveals a dummy tied to a horse with a message: Emir Suleiman will die and El Fagr will take his place in Jedra!

The natives believe the Legion has let them down and a battle ensues. The Legion are losing and Luck surrenders. He is then taken to meet El Fagr, who reveals his true identity. Back with his company who are now in prison, the Legionnaires await their death by the dawn but a young lad comes with food and a plan.

The Druses are planning an attack on El Fagr by the dawn and this proves true as the old chief turns up to release them and a battle ensues. The old man himself knocks El Fagr off a rooftop and later becomes the new ruler of Jedra.

The story took just over seven months to tell but it kept readers wanting more all the time.

As with the first strip, 'The Dawn' story was reprinted in book form in 1964. By then Geoffrey Bond had left *EAGLE* and decided to write a book which he called 'The Return of Sergeant Luck', published by Max Parrish and illustrated by a newcomer to 'Luck', William Randell.

The third story in the series, 'The Malagasy Mask', started in *EAGLE* dated 15th May, 1953, and this story was unique in that the first four episodes appeared, not in the centre, but as a full page strip on page 10. This came about as *EAGLE*'s management decided to fill the centre

pages with artwork and features about the forthcoming Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in June.

The story starts in a Legion jungle post in Madagascar when a voodoo mask is discovered outside the gates. The mask is taken to the Commandant's office and he tells Luck about a patrol sent out under Colonel Jules some months back. If the patrol ran into trouble they would send back a native article by runner.

Sergeant Luck is asked to take a patrol to find out what has happened to Colonel Jules and from then on the story takes on a theme that was familiar to a film that came out later, starring Lee Marvin and called *The Dirty Dozen*.

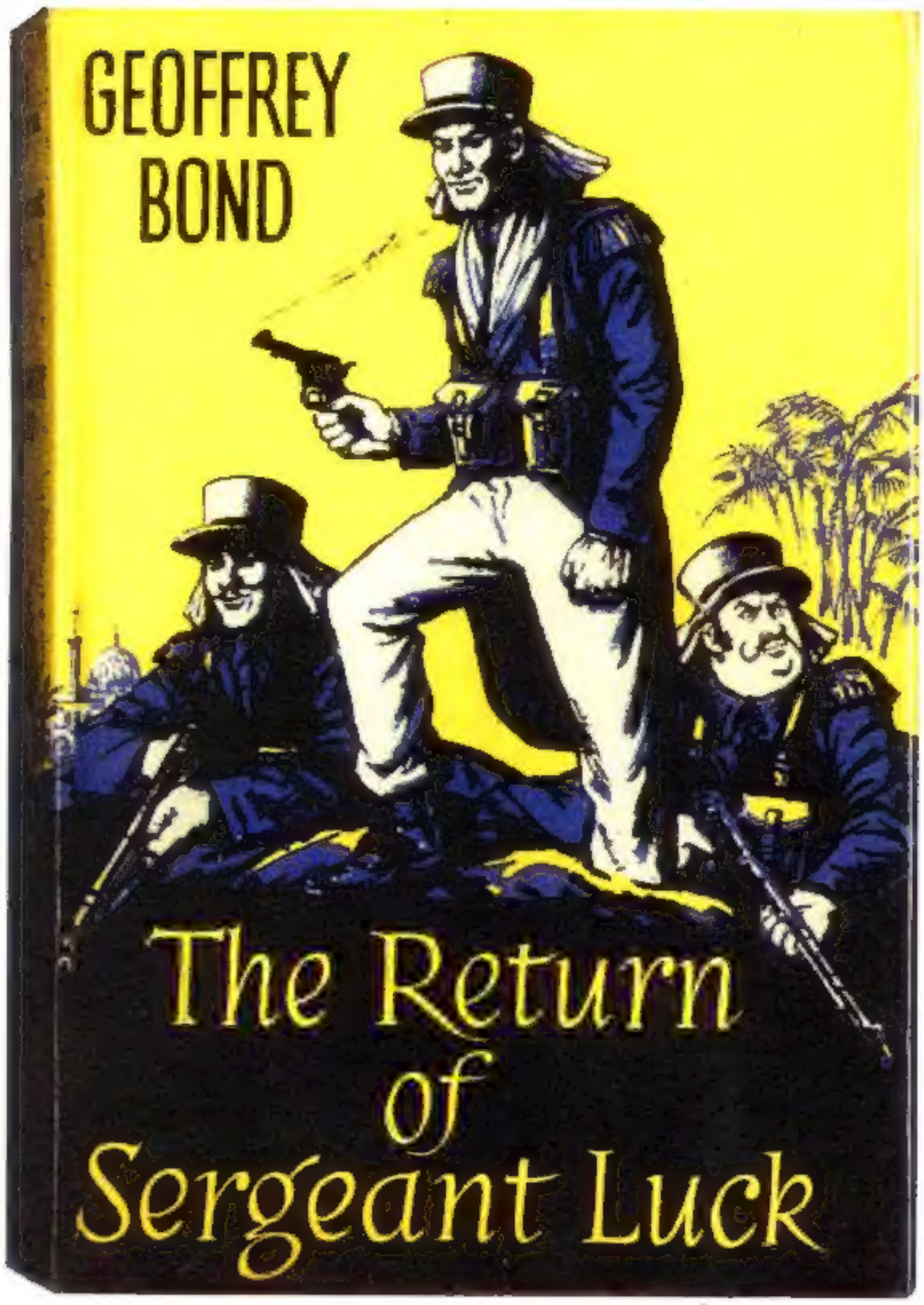
The Sergeant decides to enrol legion convicts in his patrol for this dangerous mission with the promise of a full pardon to survivors. When the patrol is recruited we are introduced, by name, to Aloysius Bimberg, although we have seen his face before. Apparently, Martin Aitchison suggested to Geoffrey Bond that they introduce a comic element into the stories and Bimberg was to be the character to do this. By the 19th of June, Luck was back in his usual place in the centre pages of *EAGLE*. The Sergeant, Corporal Trenet and the five convicts set off on their mission but as they halt for the night in the jungle, trouble is brewing.

A Sergeant Snida, who has been busted down to private, has a hatred of Luck and when everyone except Luck has bedded down for the night, Snida creeps up on him with a cut-throat razor intending to murder him. However, Snida is foiled when a bird calls out, causing his officer to whip round and put Snida out with a punch.

The following morning, Luck decides to forget the incident and move on. The patrol emerges from the jungle and come across an ostrich farm run by an ex-Sergeant Major in the Legion by the name of Bax.

Later the patrol is invited to spend the night in the farm outhouses and Luck puts the mask in a window but soon it starts to screech out "Your days are numbered!" The voice turns out to be Bax's parrot, Polly.

After several skirmishes with a wild boar and a troubled river crossing the patrol comes across a legionnaire's grave, leading Luck to believe they are in the right area. It is at this point in the saga that we have the first of the many friendly animals that feature in the 'Luck' stories. For this story it is a baby lemur which they call "Gobbo".



'Death by the Dawn' in book form (1964)

Food runs short and has to be rationed. Snida takes exception to this and decides to eat Gobbo but Luck comes to the animal's rescue. Snida once again tries to finish off Luck by putting a poisonous spider in his tent, but Gobbo wakes the Sergeant just in time.

Snida plots again, sending one of the convicts to his death in a swamp and finally deserting with two others, leaving Luck, Trenet, Bimberg and Gobbo to carry on. The trio are then captured by natives who have also captured the three deserters. The natives decide to offer them to a crocodile god called "Voay". The deserters are to be sacrificed first by being tied to stakes in a river to await the crocodile, but Luck and Co. escape and release them.

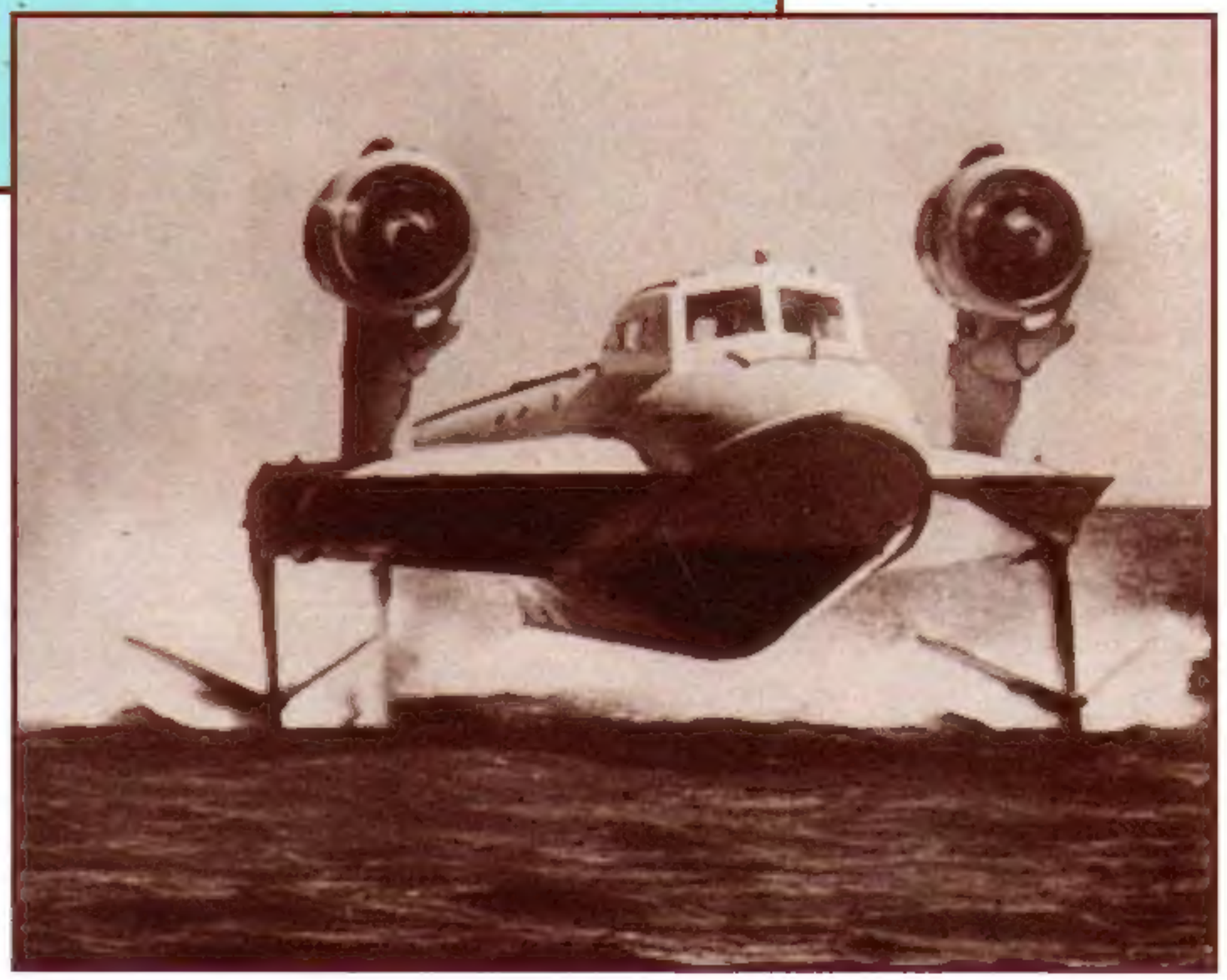
All six set off chased by the natives and they split up. A lone canoeist, who turns out to be Colonel Jules, rescues Luck's party. As they exchange stories, two of the convicts arrive and surrender themselves. Snida has gone ahead, stolen a boat and set off for the Northern Poste posing as Luck, but his luck(!) runs out as sharks get him after he had fallen in the river. The story ends with the Legionnaires reaching the Poste with Colonel Jules and the convicts are pardoned.

To be continued. ❑

THE XCH-4 HYDROFOIL

by

Derek Wilson



1954 saw the development and building of prototypes of an idea originally experimented with by Wilbur & Orville Wright in 1907; the Hydrofoil. The leader in this field in the 1950s was the Grumman Aircraft Corporation, who, along with Dynamic Development Inc., were building an experimental vessel for the Maritime Administration. At the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, under the longwinded document title 'U.S. Navy Classified and Confidential Trials towards the Elimination of Ocean Environment Variations in Integrated Detection, Localization and Attack Systems', the hydrofoil XCH-4 was used in vectoring attack sequences to utilize the craft as a submarine chaser, because the XCH-4 was the fastest craft on the water, capable of 78 knots (90 mph). These documents and reports were not changed from "Confidential" to "Unclassified" for public viewing until September 2007, even though the original downgrading date was officially 12 years.

Photographs of the XCH-4 were printed in *Popular Science* magazine, and the September 1954 issue of *LIFE* magazine under an article titled 'Boats That Fly Atop the Water' showing the 450 hp XCH-4 at speed and mooring with two men standing on the hull.

The man stood on the right is William P. Carl, whose involvement in the creation of the XCH-4 led to it being called "Carl's Boat" .

I can only surmise at this point that Frank Hampson was a regular reader of *LIFE* magazine in his constant quest for inspiration and perfection in the design of futuristic vehicles and craft, and that he noticed the fabulous design of the XCH-4 as something he could use. Frank contacted the then President of Dynamic Developments Inc., William P. Carl, and it was agreed that Frank could use the design which eventually appeared as the ship *Turmoil* in the first panel of *EAGLE*, Vol. 6, No. 23, 10th June 1955, and adapted the design to create the *Poseidon*.

As a gesture of thanks, Frank framed the original art alongside the cut-out panel from *EAGLE* and, signed by Frank Hampson and Don Harley, it was sent as a gift dedicated to William P. Carl.

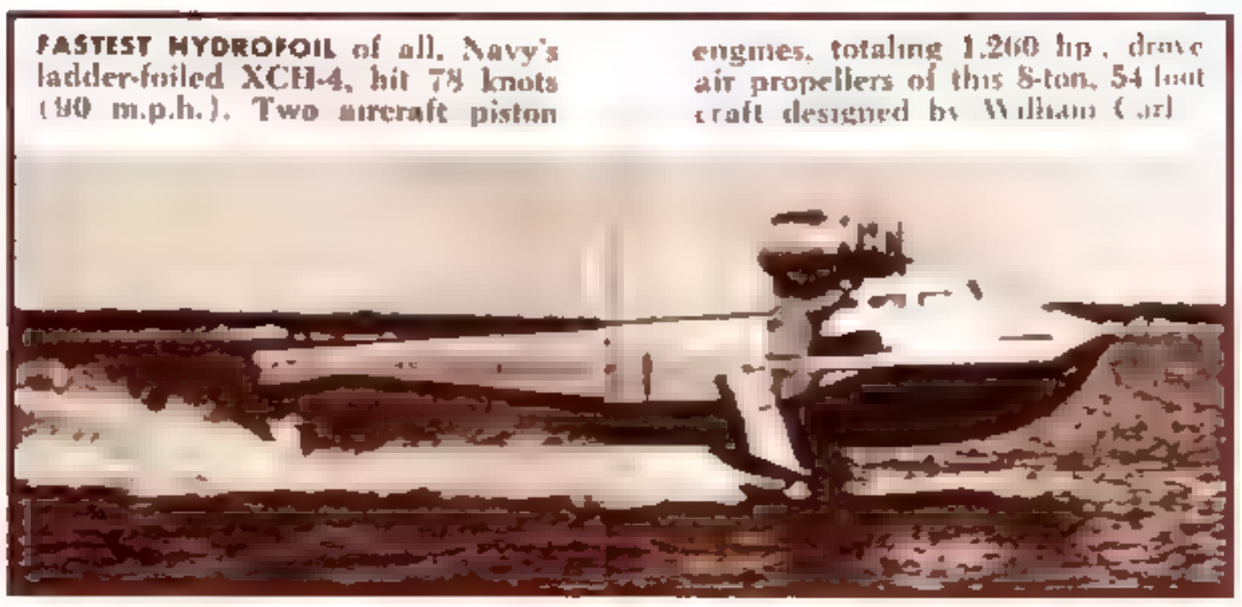
READ ABOUT EAGLE'S SUMMER HOLIDAY PLANS ON PAGE 11!
EAGLE
DAN DARE
PILOT OF THE FUTURE
THE MAN FROM NOWHERE
ABANDON SEARCH AND RETURN TO BASE
NOW DON'T START THAT AGAIN DAN LET'S FIND THE MOTHER SHIP BEFORE WE START CHASING HER LITTLE ONES!
DO YOU AGREE WITH GABE'S THEORY THAT THE SHIP BROKE THE LIGHT BARRIER?
I AGREE WITH ANYTHING COLONEL DAN SAYS
WHAT'S THAT?

SIGNAL FROM A.I. SIR ABANDON SEARCH AND RETURN TO BASE
ABOUT TIME! IT'S GOING TO BLOW BLUE BLAZES ANYHOW I'M BEGINNING TO DOUBT IF THAT "FOREIGN BODY" EVER EXISTED

Last year I successfully contacted William's son, Peter Carl, who is now the Director of Studies for Gonville & Caius College at the University of Cambridge. He takes up the story; the following (edited) is Peter's response to my request for information:

"Dear Derek,

I vividly recall that drawing hanging over my father's desk (it was, as you will I'm sure agree, a far more interesting rendering than all the official paintings and photographs) - it was sold with the estate at his death. I first spotted it in his office at Dynamic Developments, then in a Seaplane hangar in Babylon NY; and he kept it with him whenever he moved (which was quite frequently). My memory of the drawing was that my father was contacted by Frank Hampson, there was a brief discussion of what the XCH-4 could do and what Naval hydrofoils might become, (I recall speculative drawings of destroyers and cruisers on hydrofoils at the time .... in fact, there were three to follow the XCH-4 - the Plainview, the Highpoint, and the Grumman.... there are of course many others), and Frank took it from there.


FASTEST HYDROFOIL of all, Navy's ladder-foiled XCH-4, hit 78 knots (90 m.p.h.). Two aircraft piston engines, totaling 1,260 hp., drove air propellers of this 8-ton, 54 foot craft designed by William Carl

Some months later, Frank's drawing turned up - my father's comment was that Frank had indulged his imagination a bit, but his principal reaction was very positive, as his care with the image for the next 50 years demonstrates.

Looking at it again, it is of minor interest that Frank rendered it in metal, but the original was wood frame with a plywood skin. Frank's Jet engines; rather than the propellers of the original, are not entirely fanciful - there is a wonderful style to Frank's rendering, reminds me a bit of the cars of the period. The juxtaposition with Chinese junks is both amusing - techno-futurism with a handcrafted sailboat - and historically prescient (and I suppose China is a good place for aliens to land).

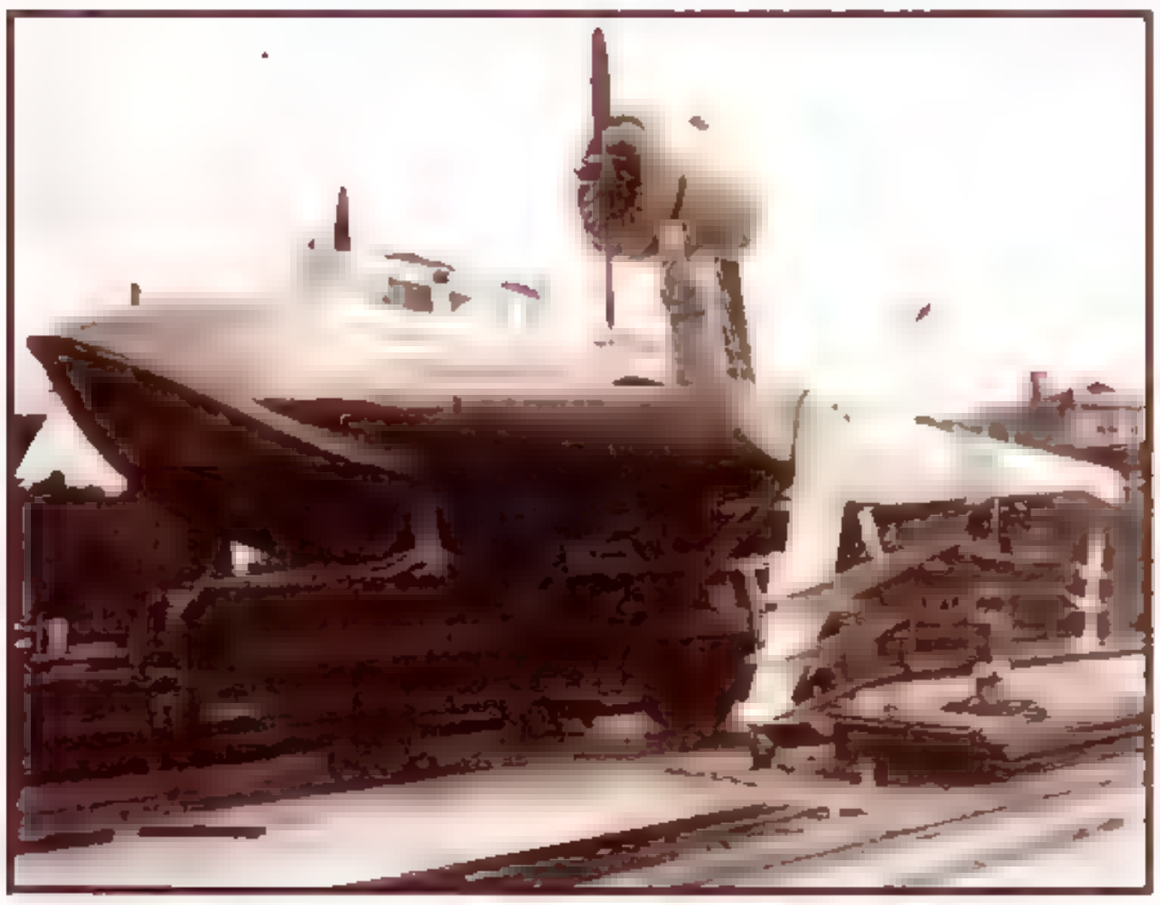
The mooring photograph - clearly the basis for Frank's foreground boat (Turmoil), reminds me of one of those docking operations that went wrong. My Dad was in the hatch on the foredeck, trying to throw a line to someone on the dock. His hand was wrapped around the stanchion, but the boat was moving too quickly and crushed two of his fingers when the stanchion hit the dock.

I forgot about the LIFE coverage - the chap with the boathook, on the right of the photo, is my Father. I don't recognise the other person. It looks like Great South Bay, Long Island, but the cropping out of any details of the shore makes it impossible to identify as Babylon (most likely).

Best of luck, thanks very much for all the images,

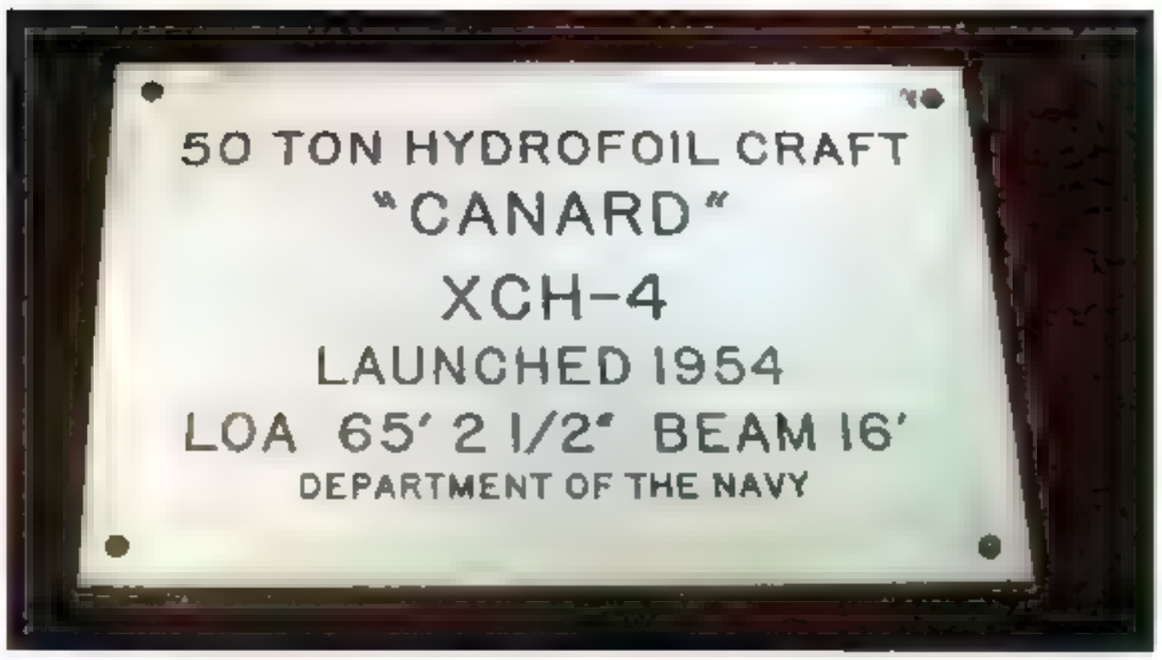
Peter "

I contacted Northrop-Grumman Corporation History Centre in New York, and the manager, Larry Feliu, was very helpful in supplying more photographs, including a scarce picture of the XCH-4 in dry dock.

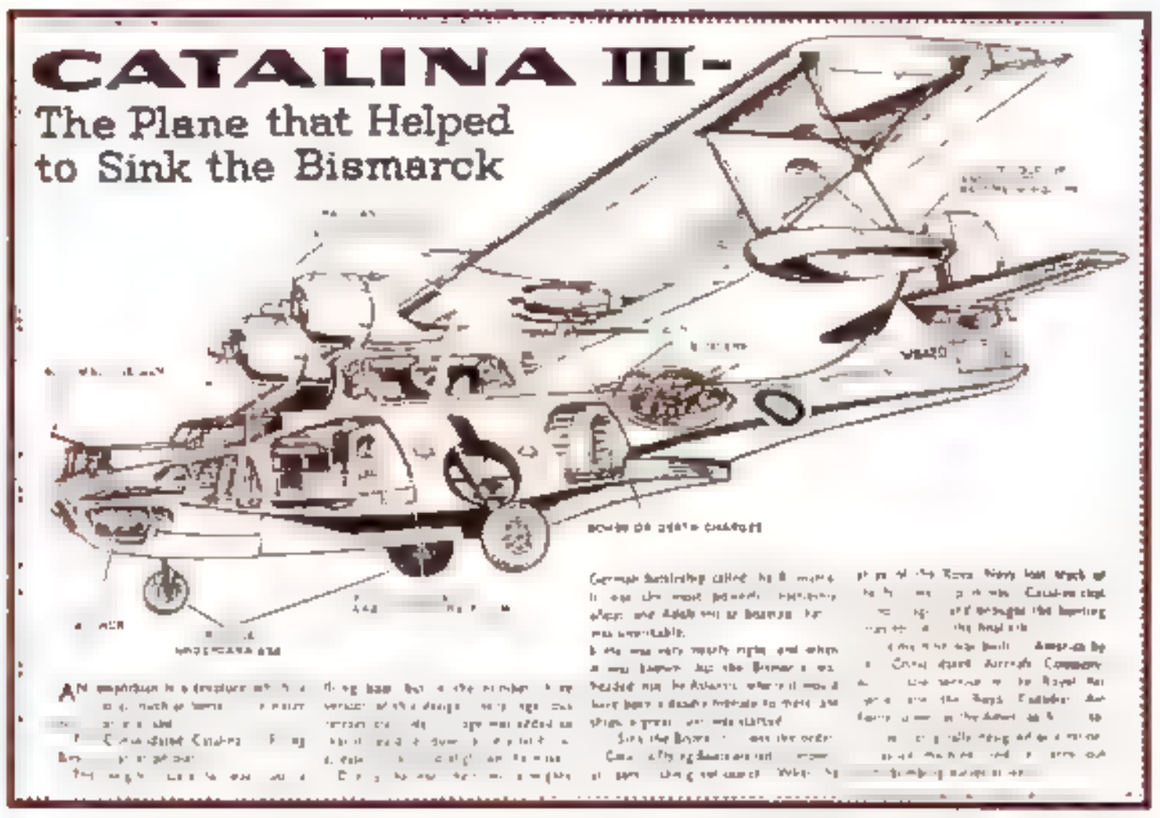


A scale model was built of the XCH-4, 26 inches in length and 13 inches wide. It is displayed in the original glass case.

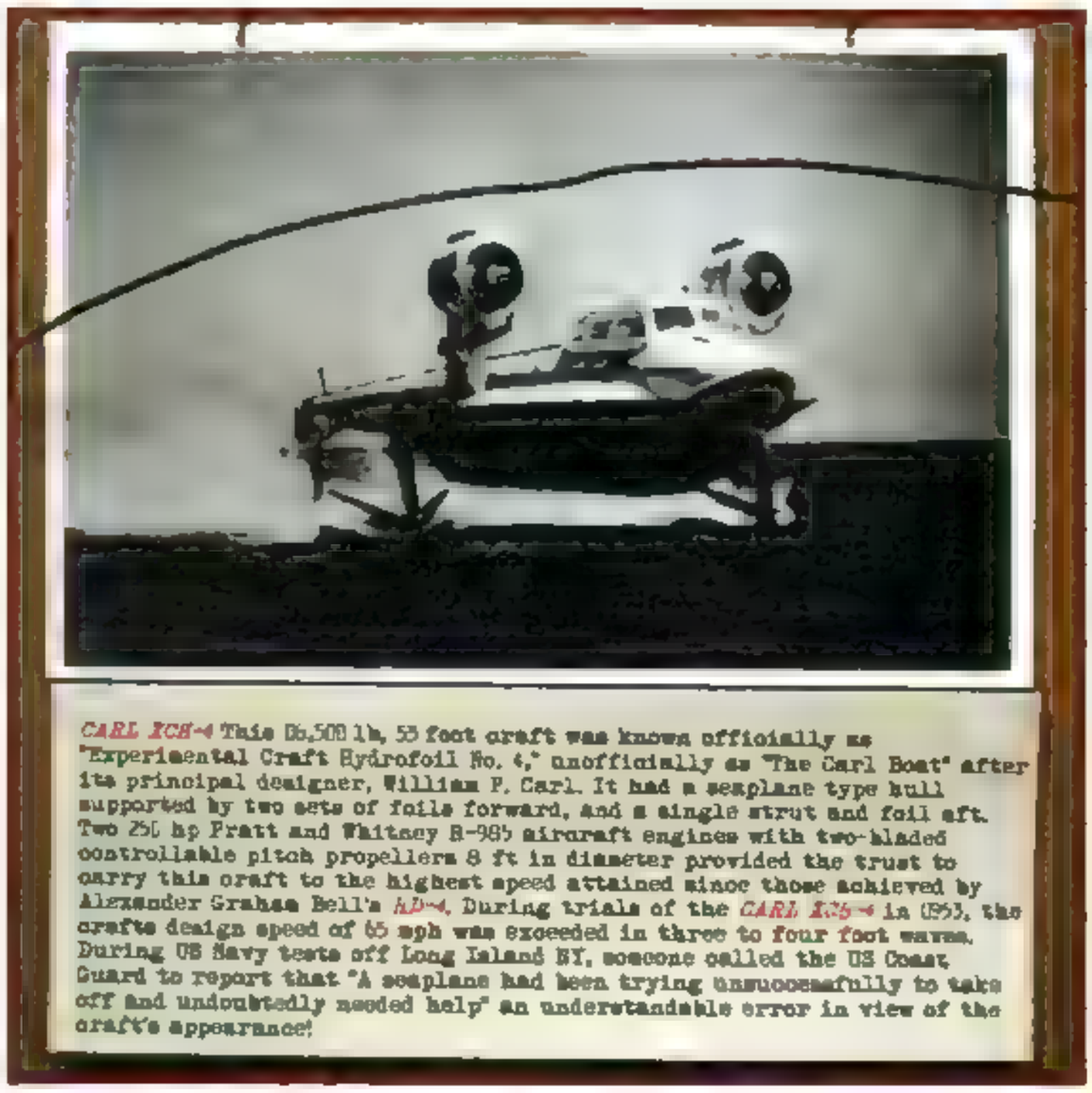
The builder is unknown but it came from Dynamic Developments Inc., so it was probably part of William Carl's project.



It is believed that the XCH-4 was adapted from the pontoon of a "Catalina" flying boat with the rear section turned over, and although the Catalina appeared as a Cutaway, the XCH-4 never had the honour. I think it would have made a great Cutaway.



The association between Frank Hampson and William P. Carl which resulted in the creation of the *Turmoil* and the *Poseidon* has never before been discovered or documented and I am very proud to have been able to correct this and add to the history of 'Dan Dare' and the *EAGLE*. ❑


CARL XCH-4 This 50,000 lb, 55 foot craft was known officially as "Experimental Craft Hydrofoil No. 4," unofficially as "The Carl Boat" after its principal designer, William P. Carl. It had a seaplane type hull supported by two sets of foils forward, and a single strut and foil aft. Two 250 hp Pratt and Whitney R-985 aircraft engines with two-bladed controllable pitch propellers 8 ft in diameter provided the trust to carry this craft to the highest speed attained since those achieved by Alexander Grahas Bell's HD-4. During trials of the CARL XCH-4 in 1953, the crafts design speed of 65 mph was exceeded in three to four foot waves. During US Navy tests off Long Island NY, someone called the US Coast Guard to report that "A seaplane had been trying unsuccessfully to take off and undoubtedly needed help" an understandable error in view of the craft's appearance!

Many thanks to Peter Carl,without whose help and permission, this article may never have been written.

Wulf The Briton conquers them all

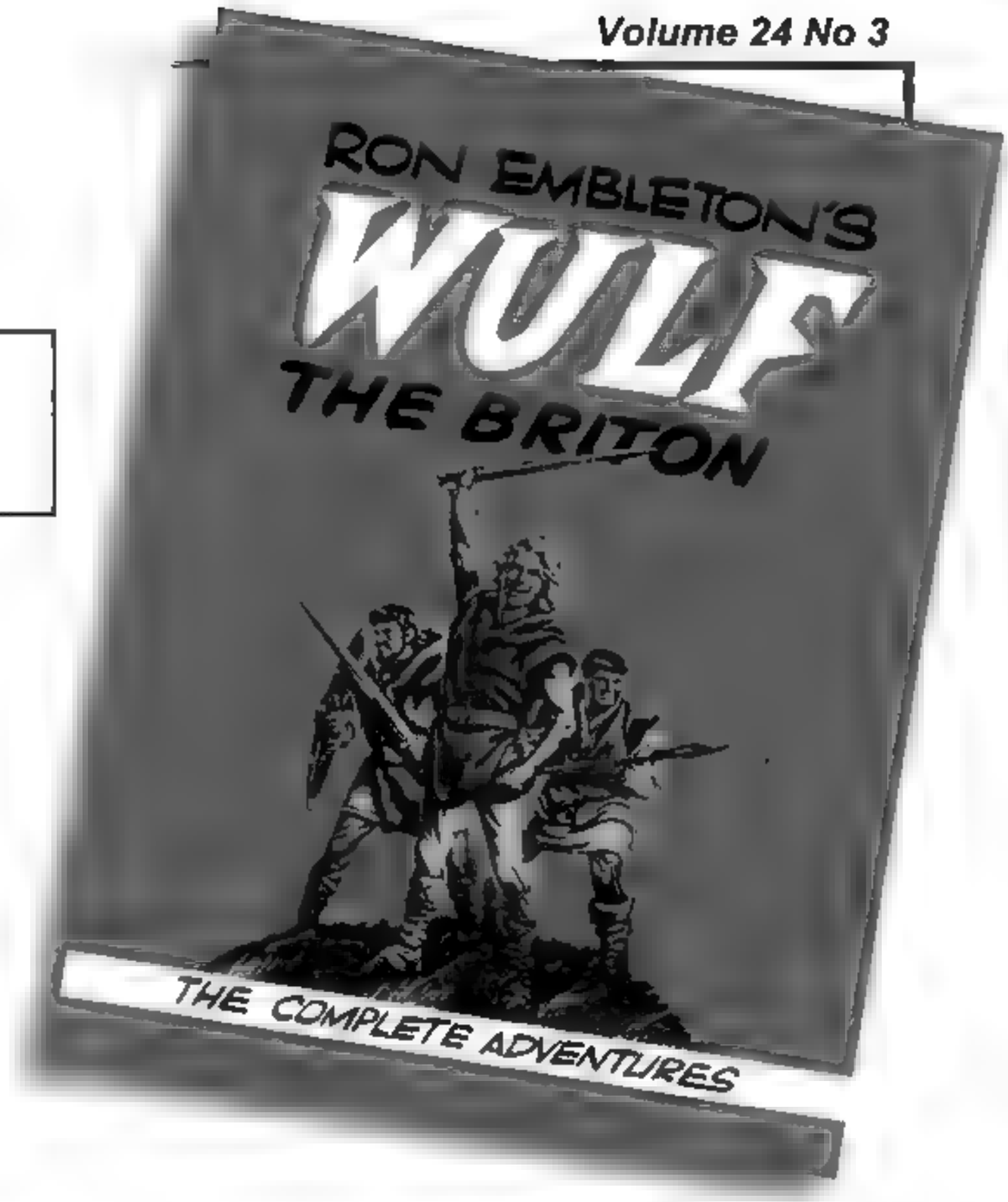
Alan Vince takes a close look at The Book Palace's tribute to one of the best remembered strips of the 1950s – Ron Embleton's Wulf The Briton.

I think that most 'Dan Dare'/*EAGLE* fans agree that Patrick Hawkey did us all a big service by publishing, in original format, all the 'Dan Dare' stories in book form. This should have been done by IPC many years before, but it never seemed a priority to them and (just maybe) they were worried that they should have to give Frank Hampson some rewards for such reprints! They did produce the 1974 *Dan Dare Annual* and although this did contain a small tribute to Frank, was produced from original artwork. Sadly this artwork (from the 'Red Moon' mystery and 'Safari in Space') was butchered in process. Likewise Frank's name had been deleted from the reprints in *EAGLE*'s final years.

More recently there have been the Titan *Dan Dare* volumes and Bible stories and the *TV21* reproductions from Reynolds and Hearn. The latter, while very much welcomed, do show the difficulties of trying to reproduce two-page spreads in book form. This problem was evident when Dragons Dream did the Montgomery story and will face any future attempts to produce books on 'Heros the Spartan' by Frank Bellamy or 'Wrath of the Gods' by Ron Embleton.

Another company which has produced some great books in recent years is The Book Palace in London. While not cheap, they were mainly dealers in comics and original artwork, The Book Palace have added to their growing list of publications such titles as *Frank Bellamy's Robin Hood* and *King Arthur* from *Swift* – and a volume devoted to Bellamy's First World War art from *Look and Learn*, and a *Trigan Empire* volume featuring the art of Don Lawrence and Ron Embleton. Other books "in the pipeline" are *The Art of John Burns* and *The Art of Ron Embleton*.

Just recently The Book Palace have really pushed the boat out on a stunning new book devoted to the whole of Ron Embleton's 'Wulf The Briton' strip from *Express Weekly*. To call this book lavish is an understatement, and the deluxe version, while very expensive, is a real collectors' item. The whole history of the strip is very well researched and I am proud to say I had, in many ways, a part in its production.



It was in 2010 that I was contacted by artist and comic enthusiast Peter Richardson about a planned book on Ron Embleton's 'Wulf the Briton'. Peter was sure such a book could be put together as he owned all the issues of *Express Weekly* and planned to scan them for the book. I, sadly, had to admit that most of my collection had been sold but I was willing to help. Sometime earlier I had sent quite a lot of material on Ron Embleton to Geoff West at The Book Palace to use in his *Art of Ron Embleton* book. Geoff had sent most of this on to Peter, who was able to use it in his text for the Wulf book. I was also asked to write a short piece about my friendship with Ron and my recollections of reading the strip back in the fifties. Luckily I also had the issue in which I am featured in 'Club Page' as a schoolboy and Peter also included the frame from 'Wicked Wanda' showing me reading a *Woof the Briton* comic! Artist Dave Gibbons and David Slinn were also drafted in to recall their memories and views on that magical time when *EAGLE* and *Express Weekly* ruled the comic world. In what seemed a very short time Peter Richardson has compiled a book that not only shows Ron's work in its full glory but has filled in so many missing facts.

Wulf made his debut in the pages of *Express 'Super Colour' Weekly* in October, 1956, in a story called 'Freedom is the Prize'. This strip had replaced Peter Jackson's popular 'Mark Fury' feature and was written by Jenny Butterworth. Jenny was the young wife of writer and comics editor Mike Butterworth and 'Wulf' was just one

of many scripts she was producing on a weekly basis.

With issue number 74, *Express Weekly* had been given a brand new look and was now very much an *EAGLE* style magazine. At this time Harry Bishop's 'Rex Keen' was on the cover and (weekly) showed Harry's great ability in illustrating the Wild West with great use of colour. Then at the beginning of 1957, 'Freedom is the Prize' (now christened 'Wulf the Briton') was given front page status. Quite an achievement for a non-science fiction or non-western strip. At this time, and for the very first episode, the artwork had been drawn by Ruggero Giovannini and his talent played no small part in the success of the strip. According to Peter Richardson's research into the history of 'Wulf the Briton' there now came a big problem. Many of the leading Italian and Spanish artists working in Britain had a dispute with their London agent and quit working for such publications as *Express Weekly*. They included not only Giovannini but Giorgio Bellavitis, Ferdinando Tacconi, and Mario Uggeri. A new artist had to be found for 'Wulf' – and quickly.

Wulf the Briton,
as it appeared in 1959 in Express Weekly

Sadly the chap chosen to try to fill Giovannini's shoes was Alan Pollack and he didn't meet with the full approval of the readership or the editors. Wulf was in danger of ending his battles all too early. But a real saviour was at hand in the shape of a young and talented artist called Ron Embleton. Ron's work had already been admired in *Mickey Mouse Weekly* and numerous books and, by a strange twist of fate, he had produced a 'Wulf the Briton' strip in 1957 for the 1958 *Express Weekly Annual*. He was a natural choice for the job, so in May, 1957, we saw the very first front page of Wulf expertly drawn by R.S. Embleton. It was the beginning of a three-year association with the character and 'Wulf' became as well known as 'Dan Dare' to many.

In compiling this massive book (and its more expensive deluxe version) Peter Richardson has not only given us every 'Wulf' strip from the weeklies but all of Ron's annual strips, examples of 'Don o' The Drums' and 'Strongbow the Mighty', 'Battleground', 'Col. Pinto' and 'Wrath of the Gods'. There are also some pages reproduced from original artwork and a lovely early photo of a beardless Ron at an Odhams dinner with fellow *Mickey Mouse Weekly* artist Ron Neilson. The reproduction is excellent throughout. This is a REAL collectors' item and worth every penny.

My one moan is a couple of comparisons made by Peter and Dave Gibbons to Ron Embleton's ability to produce two pages of 'Wulf' a week and Frank Hampson's need to "employ six to eight" artists to help him.

As I pointed out to Peter, Frank never had as many assistants at the same time and not every artist was as fast and as inspired as Ron Embleton. The 'Dan Dare' production was a very different from 'Wulf' and Frank and Ron were two different artists. Plus the fact that Frank Hampson never had the chance to learn the weekly slog on the cheaper comics in the way Ron, Don Lawrence etc. did in the early fifties. Frank was suddenly in charge of the whole magazine and it was far more personal. I just wish, in ending, that Ron was here to see this book on his much-loved character and I can only hope that Liz, Gilly and Gerry are as pleased as I am. ❑

Ron Embleton's Wulf the Briton, The Complete Adventures is published by Book Palace Books in a Limited Hardback Edition (400 copies) , priced at £125.

Two De Luxe Leatherbound Limited Editions are also available, priced (100 copies) at £295 each and (26 copies) at £350 each. The latter includes an extra 24 pages showing original Wulf art.

PC 49 and the Case of the Frightened Flower Girl

by Alan Stranks

Adapted for *Eagle Times* by Keith Howard

Part 1

"Pick 'em up, Archie," complained Joan Carr as she glanced anxiously at the distant art décor of the cinema, just visible in the gloom. "We'll miss the start of the big film. Don't policemen ever walk fast?"

Off-duty PC49 Archibald Berkeley-Willoughby shot a reproachful glance at his fiancée as she hurried him perilously across the busy High Street crossing.

"Have a heart, Joan, I've been pounding the beat all day. My feet are killing me."

"Roses, sir – lovely red roses!" a voice called out to them from a closed shop doorway. "Buy a red rose for your lady, sir, fresh out this morning."

"Wait a sec, Joan." Archie paused and glanced down at the mousey, duffle-coated figure with a tray of roses before her. " How much, Miss?"

"Half a dollar to you, guv. Here's a beauty for the lady."

But Archie ignored the proffered rose and selected another from the tray."No, I think I'll take this one. Two and six…there you are."

Some distance ahead Joan noticed Archie's absence. "Archie! Do come on!"

"Coming, darling," grinned Archie, catching up with her and executing a mawkish bow. "Here you are – a rose for my lady."

Joan's irritation vanished in a flash. "Oh, Archie – it's lovely."

"Hey, sir!" the flower girl called after them. "Not that one. Wait a minute,sir."

Archie and Joan stared in astonishment as the flower girl hurried up to them. "That rose," she gasped. " I want it back."

"Want it back?" echoed Archie.

"What ever for?" Joan queried.

"You took the wrong one. That's a special rose – for a regular customer."

"Special rose?" Archie stared at her incredulously. "What is this? Give him one of the others."

"No, sir. I must have that one. Please give it me back."

"Don't be ridiculous - I…hey…you!"

Within seconds the girl had snatched the rose from Joan's hand and hurried away down the crowded street, oblivious to Archie's protestations. "No, Archie, don't make a scene," Joan begged him. "It doesn't matter. Come on."

"But this is outrageous!" fumed Archie. "I buy a rose and –"

Now roseless, Joan's impatience had returned. "Archie B. Willoughby, if I miss the start of this film you've had it."

"Oh, all right," Archie shrugged. "Whatever you say. Who was that girl?" he added thoughtfully.

"Who was she?" echoed Joan, not understanding.

Archie frowned. "I've got a feeling I've seen her before somewhere."

Joan sighed, exasperated. "Archie, you are the limit – please!"

The stentorian voice of the cinema's commissionaire endorsed her plea. "New programme just commencing. Stalls on the left – circle on the right. Seats in all parts."

Joan gave Archie a shove towards the ticket office. "Get the four and six ones, Archie, and make it snappy."

* * * * * *

It was raining when they came out of the cinema. "Well you can say what you like," complained Archie, "But I thought the big film stank. That crooner chap gives me the willies."

Joan smiled, replaying the film in her minds eye. "I think he's divine."

"The second feature was much better."

"What?" Joan favoured Archie with a look of disgust. "That awful thriller thing – with a murder every minute? Nothing like that ever happens in real life."

Archie uttered a blood curdling laugh. "Buckets of Ber-lood. Buckets of blood. Come on, darling - this way."

"Through that beastly dark alley? Why?" Archie affected a James Cagney accent as he took her arm and approached the gloomy alleyway. "S'nice night for a moider, baby!"

Joan shuddered. "Shut up, Archie, you're frightening me. Gosh – it is dark."

"It's all right," Archie reassured her as they made their way down the alley. "This is a short cut through Soho to our bus stop. There's a lamp just around the corner… here we are."

A choked scream broke from Joan's throat. She pointed to a sprawled figure on the ground before them. "Archie, look! What is it?"

Archie uttered a startled exclamation. "It's all right," he breathed. Only a drunk. He's picked a fine place to sleep it off – right in this alley."

Joan shrank way from the motionless form. "Come on Archie - let him be."

But Archie had knelt down by the prostrate form. "Wait a bit," he muttered. "Gosh, this poor devil's had it. He's stone cold."

"Not dead?"

"As mutton."

Joan felt sick. "Oh my goodness! Archie – let's go and call a policeman."

Archie glanced up at her. "Policeman?" he grinned. "What do you think I am? No sign of violence," he muttered. "Looks like natural causes. Heart attack probably. Spivvy looking isn't he?"

"Archie - please."

"Just a shake! He's got something in his hand." Archie disengaged the object from the cold, stiffening fingers. "It's a rose – a red rose!"

Joan placed a trembling hand on his shoulder and shook him. "Archie - please come away."

Archie slowly stood up. "My Sunday helmet," he whispered. "Joan, you'll probably think I've gone raving mad, but this is the rose that flower girl snatched from you."

"Don't be absurd. There are thousands of roses in London."

Archie held up the crumpled flower and strained his eyes looking at it. "Look at the bud on the stem. It's the same rose I tell you." Joan shook her head."You're crazy. There was silver paper around mine. And there's none on that – oh."

"What's the matter? What are you doing?"

Joan turned away. "I…dropped a glove. I was just picking it up. And I'm not going to wait here any longer."

"Alright, alright," Archie sighed. "We'll just pass the word on to the man on the beat. Come on."

Joan breathed a sigh of relief. "And about time too."

"Come on, Archie - let him be", said Joan

They made their way from the darkened alley into the bright and lurid lights of Soho. "All the same," murmured Archie, "I'll bet this is the same rose."

* * * * * *

Next morning the weather had miraculously taken a turn for the better, to such a degree that Archie strode about the sunlit portals of Q Division Police Station in full-throated song. That is until he came face to face with a grim-visaged Detective Sergeant Wright. "Oh. Good morning Sergeant Wright," Archie greeted him cheerfully.

"Morning, Forty–nine," the latter responded dourly. "What have you been up to?"

"Me, sir?"

"Yes, you! The D.D.I. wants to see you at once."

Archie's face was a picture. "Inspector Wilson? Do I? I mean, does he?" his words trailed off in a downward groan.

"What were you doing in C Division last night?"

"Oh, that," Archie replied flippantly. "I just fell over a corpse in Soho. I couldn't help it. I reported it to the man on the beat. There's nothing wrong is there, Sarge?"

Wright smiled without humour. "Not a thing - except the stiff you fell over was Diamond Drew, a very bad type indeed. And he didn't die from natural causes. There was enough potassium cyanide in his innards to poison a regiment."

"Not murder, Sarge?"

Wright shook his head. "C Division seem to think it's suicide."

"Oh, well," Archie sighed with relief. "It's nothing to do with us, is it, Sarge?"

The detective fixed Archie with a flinty eye. "No it isn't. And that's what Roper's been saying."

"Roper?" echoed the constable.

"D.D.I., C Division! He got Inspector Wilson out of bed at one o'clock last night."

"I say," Archie sympathised. "I don't suppose the Inspector liked that, did he?"

"No he did not. That's why he wants to see you."

Fortynine mentally braced himself. "Oh, well, I suppose I'd better…oh dear."

"For your information, Fortynine," Wright warned him, leading the way to Inspector Wilson's office, "you've planted those big flat feet of yours right in the middle of a fine old police force feud."

"Who – me?" Archie squeaked.

At the office door Wright stepped aside. "In you go, Fortynine."

"Er, yes, Sergeant," murmured Archie in a haunted voice. "Oh dear, and I felt so well this morning."

He tapped tentatively on the door, hoping against hope that his knock would not be heard.

"Come in," boomed the all-too-familiar voice.

Archie gulped, groaned and opened the door. Inspector Wilson was sitting at his desk, jabbing away with a pipe cleaner at his pipe which evidently was blocked. Archie was well aware that such an apparently trivial problem was enough to put the Inspector in the blackest of moods.

Wilson glared up from his labours, red faced and scowling. "What is it?" he demanded to know.

"It's me, Inspector," Archie meekly announced himself. "PC Fortynine."

Wilson gave up on his pipe and dropped it in the "Out" tray. "Ah, come in Constable," he brusquely invited.

Archie obediently approached the desk, wondering what was to come. He was soon to find out.

"I've had a request from Inspector Roper of C Division for a full statement of your discovery of Diamond Drew's body last night. It appears that he was not only under the influence of cocaine when he died, but he was also carrying some hundreds of pounds worth of the stuff in his pockets."

Archie's eyebrows rose in surprise. Even his moustache seemed to twitch. "Cocaine? Good gracious! Was he? I mean – yes sir."

Wilson eased his bulk back in his swivel chair and cast Archie a searching glance. "Very well, type your statement right away. And listen, Fortynine, for the love of Mike keep out of C Division. This is not our case, so if you've any funny ideas of putting your nose into it, get rid of 'em at once. Leave it to Detective Inspector Roper and his brilliant staff of flat feet. That's all."

Archie couldn't believe his luck in getting off so lightly. "Really, sir? Er, yes, sir. Thank you, sir. I will indeed, sir."

* * * * * *

"But Archie," Joan objected, "even if this fellow Diamond Drew was a dope peddler, as you call it, why did he poison himself in a lonely back street?"

It was evening and Archie had called at Joan's flat to bring her up to date with the situation.

"Search me," he shrugged in response to her question. "Selling cocaine to drug fiends is a ghastly racket. Maybe his cocaine caught up with him. There's a ring of those swine selling the stuff in the West End. Got a cigarette, darling?"

"Now get out!" said Wilson.
Doctor Bellamy ushered Archie ahead of him.

Joan passed him her handbag. "Help yourself. Tell me, how do they take cocaine – the addicts, I mean ?"

"Usually in a white powder form," Archie replied, rummaging through the handbag. "They either take it like snuff, or swallow it. Where are these cigarettes?"

"Somewhere in there. Archie, if the police know about this dope ring, why don't they break it?"

"The Yard are doing their best, but it's almost impossible to get evidence. The victims won't squeal for fear their supplies of the drug will be cut off. Anyway, Diamond Drew put paid to himself – and good riddance."

But Joan was anxiously watching Archie's assault on her handbag. "Here," she protested. "Go easy on that handbag!"

"No cigarettes here," Archie muttered, still digging away. "Just look at the state of this bag! Hairpins, compact, comb, twopence ha'penny, nail file, ration book, lipstick..." He paused, his eyes narrowing in thought. "A piece of tin foil! Now what's that for?"

Joan's laugh was forced. "Oh, that. Throw it on the fire!"

Archie studied her, his suspicions aroused. "Why the laugh? What's it for?"

Joan tried to force a casual note in her voice. "As a matter of fact I picked it up last night!"

"Near Diamond Drew's body, eh?" asked her boyfriend. "When you pretended to drop your glove? Is that it?"

"Well, yes," Joan retorted defensively. "You kept on insisting that the rose in Drew's hand was the one that the girl snatched from me, and, well, I know you. I didn't want you to start manufacturing clues from nothing. It couldn't have been the same rose, anyhow – and they all had tin foil on the stems."

"Supressing evidence, eh? Hello!" Archie stared closely at the gleaming metallic flimsey, "there's a few grains of powder on this tin foil!"

"Shaken from my puff, I expect."

"No, this is whiter than face powder, and coarser." Archie held it to his nose. "Good Lord, I knew it!"

"What is it?"

Archie held the tin foil to Joan. "Smell that. What's it remind you of?"

After wrinkling her nose she replied, "H'm. It's almost an almondy sort of smell."

"Exactly!" Archie's voice was low with excitement. "And that's just how potassium cyanide smells. I'll bet this tin foil contains the poison that killed Diamond Drew!"

"But why?"

Fortynine snapped his fingers. "Hold on! I've got a theory!"

"Not again," groaned Joan.

"Quiet, wench – listen! That flower girl – she was scared out of her wits when I wouldn't give her the rose back. And why? Because she was saving it for Drew."

"I don't get it."

"She gave him that poison! It was wrapped around the stem of that rose – hidden in the tin foil."

Joan shook her head. "But it's fantastic! There's no reason – "

Archie raised his hand to check her protests. "Think! Drew was a cocaine addict. Assume that girl's a dope runner and distributes the stuff round the stems of her flowers. Drew goes there to buy his daily dose. She gives him a rose - but instead of cocaine he gets potassium cyanide. He goes into a dark alley to take the stuff, swallows it and in a few seconds later he's dead. That's murder!"

"Brilliant, my dear Holmes," Joan smirked. "But you miss one point. Drew was carrying hundreds of pounds worth of cocaine in his pockets. If he was a peddler himself why should he buy it from her?"

Archie cursed with disappointment as his meteoric theory burst like a pricked balloon. "I'm sorry, darling," Joan sympathised.

With a sigh, Archie said "Well, anyway, I'm going to get the police surgeon to check and see if there was cyanide in this tin foil."

Joan glanced at the mantelshelf. "What, now?"

Her boyfriend followed her glance. "No. Not now but – blimey! Yes, now! Look at the time. I'm on duty five minutes ago. See you in Coffee Dan's at nine thirty tonight."

* * * * * *

Thirty minutes later found Archie, accompanied by the police surgeon, in Inspector Wilson's office, concluding his explanations. "And so, sir, I took the tin foil to Doctor Bellamy, sir, and he says – "

"It's certainly potassium cyanide, Inspector," the police surgeon backed him up.

But Inspector Wilson was far from satisfied. "All right – all right! This wonderful and vital clue discovered by PC49 and his fiancée has been used to wrap poison. It's found beside the body of Diamond Drew – he's full of poison and stone dead. For some reason or other he's poisoned himself. So what?"

"Well, sir," began Fortynine.

The angry pinkness of Wilson's face was rapidly approaching furnace red. "Listen, Fortynine. You will kindly keep your nose out of things that don't concern you – particularly those things that happen on C Division. Apart from the fact that my old acquaintance Inspector Roper wouldn't like it – I simply will not have my constables playing Dick Barton all over the West End! Now, get out!"

Archie almost fell over his feet as he retreated. "No, sir. Yes, sir – I mean, good morning, sir."

"Just a moment, Fortynine," murmured Dr Bellamy. "I want a word with you outside. Goodbye, Inspector," he added, ushering Archie ahead of him into the corridor.

Wilson snarled a farewell, mercifully cut off, as Bellamy closed the door behind him. The doctor turned to Archie and burst out laughing. "Let that be a lesson to you, young shaver."

"But, Doctor, I can't see why I copped that basinful."

"You just got caught up in an old dog fight between Wilson and Roper," Bellamy grinned. "It's been going on for years." He fished in his pocket and produced a bunch of keys. "Fortynine, there's a little thing I want you to do for me. I'm going away for the weekend. Keep an eye on my house, will you? Here's the keys."

Archie took them and nodded. "Certainly, sir. I'll check up every time I pass."

"Good man. Don't let this morning upset you, Fortynine. Just keep out of C Division."

"You bet I will, sir," Archie heartily promised.

* * * * * *

That evening at Coffee Dan's Café Archie told Joan of his encounter with Inspector Wilson. "And then Inspector Wilson tore me off a shocking strip."

"Anyone would think I'd murdered Diamond Drew," he added reproachfully, stung by Joan's unsympathetic laughter.

"Two coffees please, Dan," he called out to the proprietor behind the counter, who was happily whistling as he dried a pile of coffee cups.

"Coming up, Cock," responded Dan, and resumed whistling.

"But you said it was suicide," Joan reminded Archie.

"They said it was suicide," Archie corrected her "But I can't get that flower girl off my mind. I'm sure she's tangled up with this somewhere. I wish I could remember where I saw her."

Still whistling, Dan appeared at the table. "Two coffees," he announced placing the tray between them.

Archie absently thanked him, his mind deep in thought. "You'd better forget the whole business, Archie," Joan advised him. "It's not your division anyway, and I can't see why you –"

"You think I'm a fool, don't you?" snapped Stella

"North Africa!" Archie suddenly exclaimed."My Sunday helmet, I've got it."

"Got what?" asked his girlfriend, mystified.

"Did you hear what Dan was whistling?"

"Lilli Marlene, wasn't it?"

Archie nodded. "Lilli Marlene, and that's the song Stella Webb was singing when I last saw her!"

"Stella Webb?" echoed Joan, still puzzled. "Who's she?"

"That flower girl! She came out with a third-rate concert party to entertain the troops. I saw her in Cairo. She was blonde then. Just before the party moved on, she vanished. There was a devil of a flap about it. But they never found her."

"Are you the sure she's the same girl?"

"Abso – blooming – lutely! She's putting on a Cockney accent now. But if that flower girl and Stella Webb aren't one and the same I'll eat one of Dan's cheesecakes! Gosh, I'd like to know where she is now."

"If you really want to know," Joan began, "it's easy enough to find out. She's a flower girl. She's bound to have a pitch somewhere – probably near to where you saw her – in Piccadilly. Tell you what. I'm off early tomorrow. I'll go up West and do a bit of sleuthing. What did you say her name was?"

"Stella Webb."

Joan nodded. "Stella Webb."

* * * * * *

Sandor poured himself a whiskey and soda in his office above his club The Plush Room. "But surely you're not losing your nerve, my dear Stella?" he remarked.

Stella Webb sat on the expensive and equally expansive divan, nursing a neat scotch. No longer the mousey little person in the drab duffle coat. Her dress was expensive looking if flashy. Also her make-up was a far cry from the flower girl image. But any attractiveness was marred by the cold lines around her eyes and mouth.

"Listen, Sandor," she snapped. "You try carrying that flower tray around for eight hours a day – peddling dope right under the eyes of the police."

"You're well paid for it," Sandor retorted, turning to face her. "Remember when I found you in Cairo you were nothing – a soubrette with a tenth-rate concert party." His hand gestured expansively. "I've given you luxury, money, clothes, a car, merely for carrying out a simple task with no risk whatsoever attached to it."

Stella's laugh was more of a bitter sneer. "Cairo – how you fooled me. If I hadn't been a sucker enough to fall for you I might have made something of my life."

Sandor laughed. "What, for instance? A career on the stage? Ha! My dear Stella!"

"You think I'm a fool, don't you?" Stella flung back. "You think I don't know about Diamond Drew."

"What happened to him?" Sandor inquired with mock innocence.

"I might have known when you told me to give him that particular rose, there was something devilish in it."

"Go on," the dangerously silky voice prompted her.

"He thought it was his usual deck of cocaine. He went up the alley to swallow it and a few seconds later he was dead. That's murder!"

Sandor's voice took a hard edge. "You're getting too clever, Stella."

"Why did you do it?"

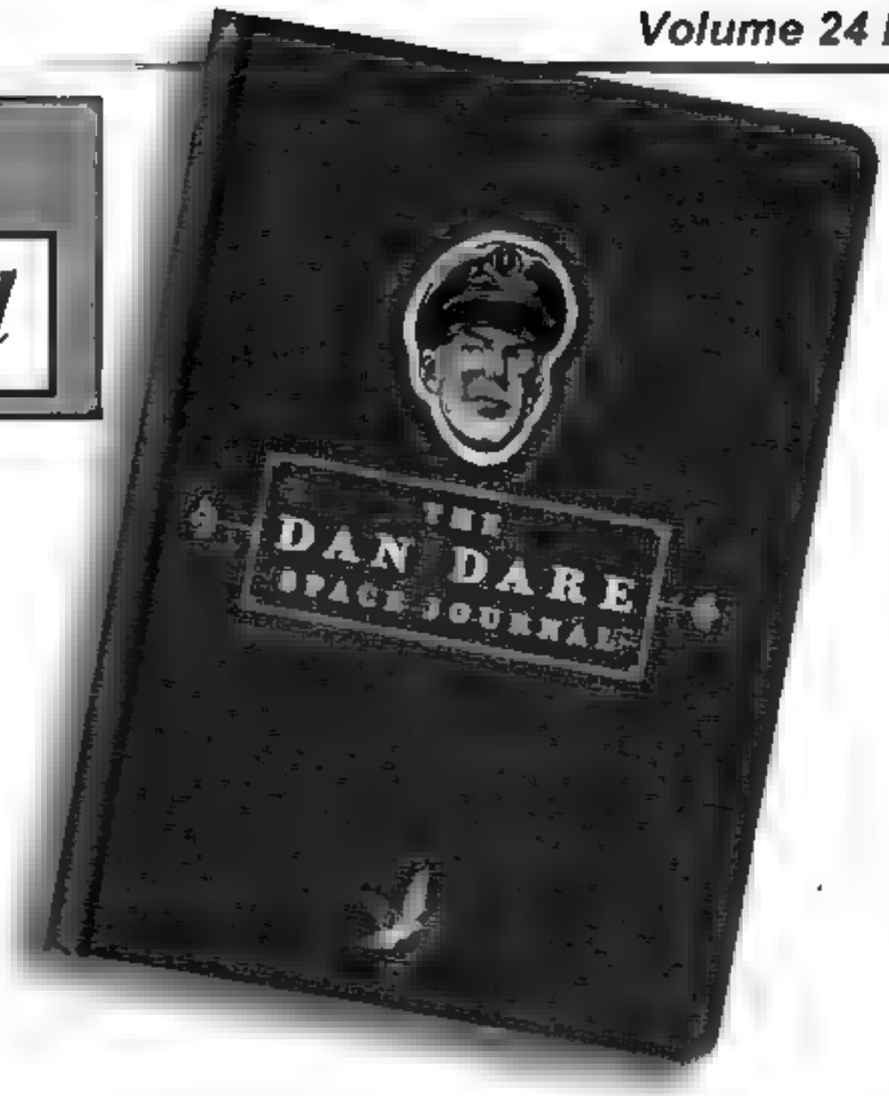
"Diamond Drew and his friend Panton have been double-crossing me. They cut in on my Mayfair territory with half a dozen match sellers. For the ordinary person they have ordinary matches. For special clients the box contains cocaine. So this is my plan....."

What is Sandor's evil plan?

Find out in the next issue. ❑

Eagle Times Window

The Dan Dare Space Journal



The ***Dan Dare Space Journal*** is the latest offering from Orion Books, whose *EAGLE*-related products began in 2007 with *Eagle Annual of the 1950s*, and continued through *Eagle Annual of the Cutaways*, *Eagle Annual of the 1960s*, and the *Eagle Diary 2011*. The same company has also brought us an audiobook version of the first half of Dan Dare's Venus story (no sign of the second half!) and Daniel Tatarsky's *Dan Dare: The Biography*.

The *Dan Dare Space Journal* is very similar in format to last year's *Eagle Diary*, but this time, rather than restrict the use of the publication to a single year (I wonder how many copies of *Eagle Diary 2011* will remain unsold awaiting the return of 2011?), the publisher has wisely chosen to offer a journal which can be used for any year.

The journal is hard-backed, measures 8½ x 6 inches and is ¾ inches thick. As before, it features both a red ribbon book mark and a black elastic closure strap. However, where *The Eagle Diary* was red covered and featured a prominent *EAGLE* emblem, *The Dan Dare Journal* is appropriately (Spacefleet) green and sports a familiar portrait of Dan Dare (ie as used on *The Biography*).

The contents draw again from the archives of the original *EAGLE* - but this time restricted to exclusively 'Dan Dare' material. The journal retains a "retro look". Where the previous *Diary* had an introduction by Daniel Tatarsky, the *Journal* has a one-page introduction by Peter Hampson, son of Dan Dare's creator Frank Hampson (and the original model for Space Cadet 'Flamer' Spry).

With 7 days per page, the journal provides plenty of space (no pun intended!) for the user's entries, and features reproduced selections from 'Dan Dare' artwork, advertisements, etc. Some attempts are made at humorous content with 'The Highway Interstellar Code' (surely that should be 'The Interstellar Highway Code'?) utilising 1950s-style roadsigns and police hand signals, 'Digby's Vitamineats® Recipes' and 'Universal Conversion Tables'. The latter unfortunately include some mis-prints (such as "1 Earth Minute = _Ronit").

While being an attractive nostalgia item for any 'Dan Dare' fan or former *EAGLE* reader, the journal also has a practical use. It would be an ideal companion to *Dan Dare: The Biography*.

The Dan Dare Space Journal (ISBN- 978-1-4091-1270-9) is published by Orion Books at £14.99 ❑

Obituary

Geoff Provins, 1945 - 2011

Geoffrey Provins was born on 30th November, 1945, in Harrow, Middlesex. There he attended the Portland School for Boys. He started reading *EAGLE* and 'Dan Dare' during the *Prisoners of Space* story (1954) and remained with the magazine until it finished in 1969. During the eighties he attended many *Eagle Society* weekend functions and enjoyed comic and film fairs. His letters were often seen in *Eagle Times*.

For 30 years, inspired initially by thoughts of 'Dan Dare' and space travel, he worked as a storeman at the Rocket Research Establishment (later Royal Ordnance Factory) at Westcott, Buckinghamshire.

A bachelor, Geoff had many hobbies including Egyptology, mythology, railways, aviation, the cinema, hiking and, of course, collecting *EAGLE*s.

In the *Dan Dare Annual* of 1987 he had a drawing published and so his name will live on in the *EAGLE* memorabilia world.

He died of a heart attack in late July, 2011, but will be remembered by many of us as an enthusiastic member of the *Eagle Society*. ❑

L. ASHWELL WOOD

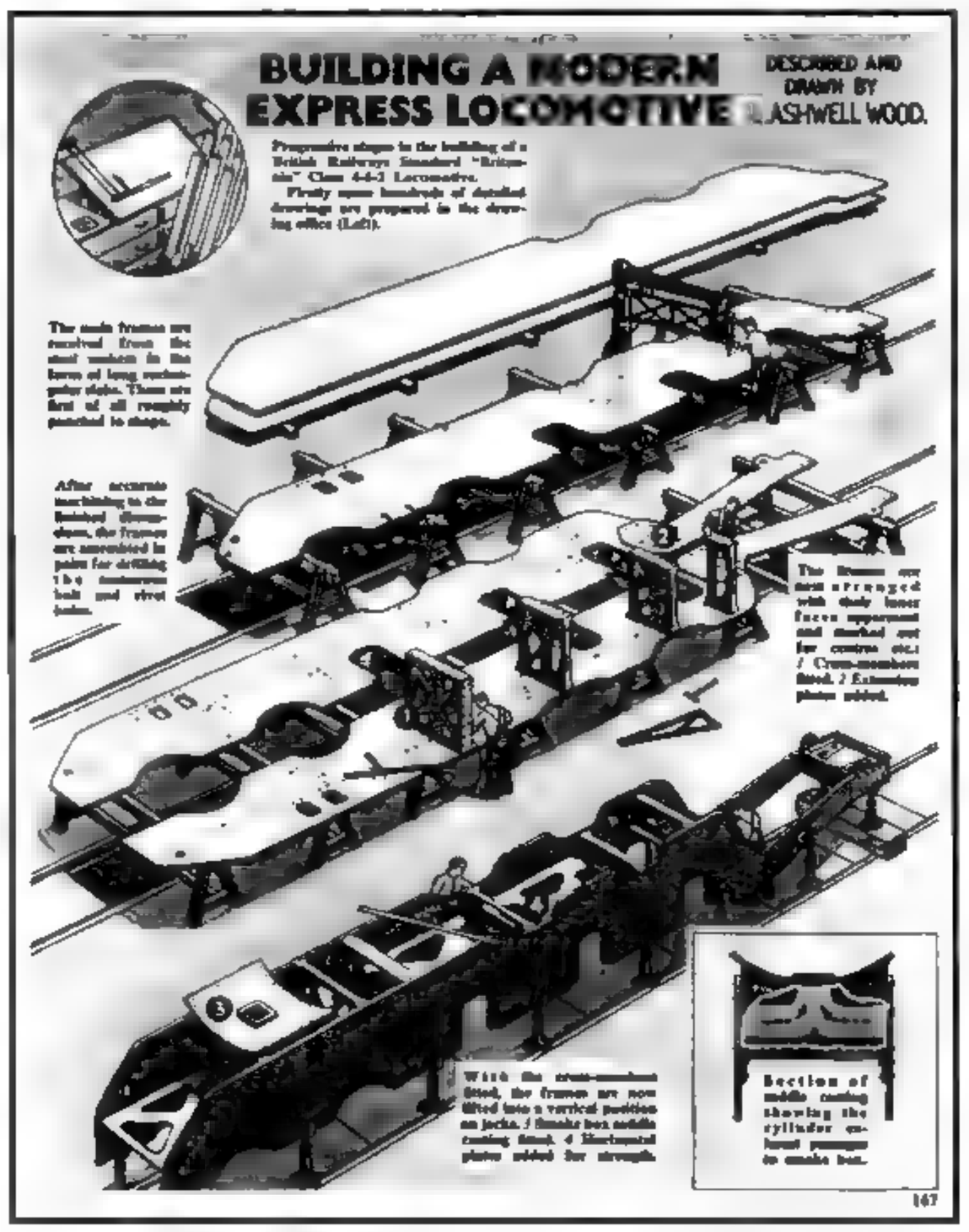
CUTAWAY MAESTRO

by Jeremy Briggs

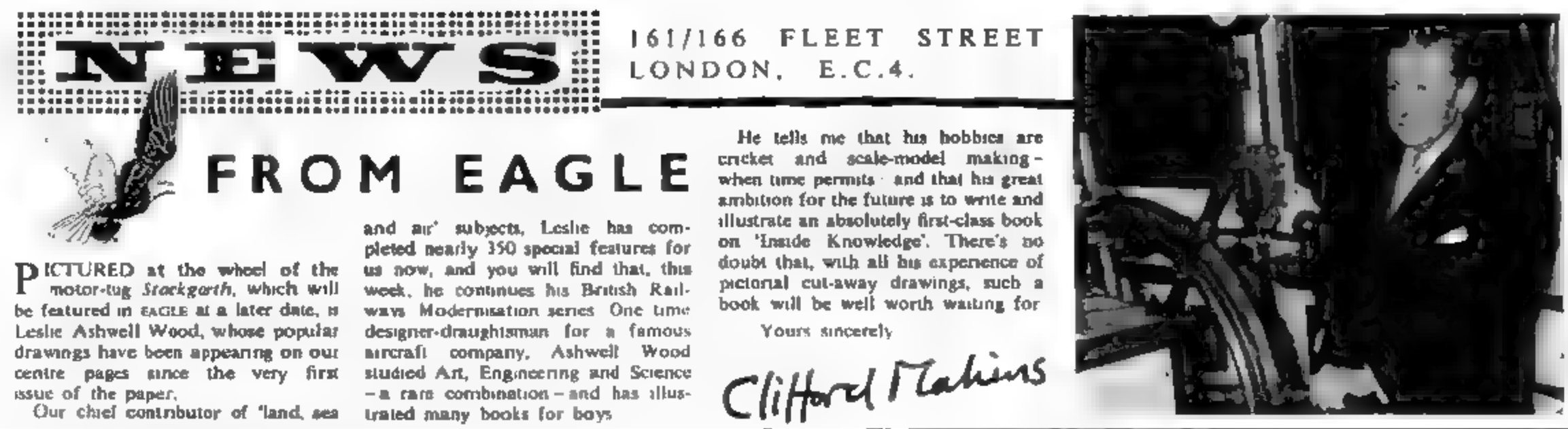
While many things changed in the *EAGLE* during its lifetime, one of the staples of the comic was the cutaway painting. These fascinating and often educational illustrations weathered the changes to the comic throughout the 1950s and 1960s, running with few gaps from the 'New Gas Turbine Electric Loco' in the first issue to (coincidentally) the 'Gas Turbine Truck' in the penultimate issue, Vol. 20, No. 16 (19th April 1969). Both these cutaways were illustrated by Leslie Ashwell Wood who was by far the most prolific cutaway artist *EAGLE* had, contributing almost two thirds of the nearly 960 cutaways published in the weekly title, in addition to a cutaway in the *Dan Dare Spacebook*, articles in the first five *Eagle Annuals* and a factual series of illustrated features in the weekly comic entitled 'In Her Majesty's Lifetime', which ran from Vol. 3, No. 46 (20th February 1953) to Vol. 4, No. 4 (1st May 1953).

In the early years of *EAGLE* it wasn't uncommon for Wood's cutaways to be published every week for up to two months at a time before another artist's would appear, which shows that he must have been able to regularly research, design, paint and deliver these complex illustrations in around one week. His workload remained at a similar level throughout the comic's life and the longest gap between his cutaways appearing was when other artists took over for eleven weeks from Vol. 12, No. 25 (24th June 1961) to Vol. 12, No. 35 (2nd September 1961). As the comic came to an end in the late 1960s, the last cutaway by another artist was John Batchelor's 'British Mk 4 Tank 1917' in Vol. 18, No. 46 (18th November 1967) and Wood was the only cutaway artist for the 74 weeks from Vol. 18, No. 47 (25th November 1967) to the final cutaway in Vol. 20, No. 16 (19th April 1969), during which time he supplied 51. This is a remarkably similar number to the 55 cutaways he supplied in the first 74 weeks of *EAGLE*'s publication, showing that even then he was still able to turn them out at a similar rate to those he had produced almost two decades beforehand.

During his entire time working on *EAGLE*, Leslie Ashwell Wood lived in the same house at Willesden Green in north-west London and when he passed away in 1973 he left a gap in *EAGLE* fandom's collective



Eagle Annual No. 5



NEWS FROM EAGLE

161/166 FLEET STREET
LONDON, E.C.4.

PICTURED at the wheel of the motor-tug *Starkgarth*, which will be featured in EAGLE at a later date, is Leslie Ashwell Wood, whose popular drawings have been appearing on our centre pages since the very first issue of the paper.

Our chief contributor of 'land, sea and air' subjects, Leslie has completed nearly 350 special features for us now, and you will find that, this week, he continues his British Railways Modernisation series. One time designer-draughtsman for a famous aircraft company, Ashwell Wood studied Art, Engineering and Science—a rare combination—and has illustrated many books for boys.

He tells me that his hobbies are cricket and scale-model making—when time permits—and that his great ambition for the future is to write and illustrate an absolutely first-class book on 'Inside Knowledge'. There's no doubt that, with all his experience of pictorial cut-away drawings, such a book will be well worth waiting for.

Yours sincerely

Clifford Makins

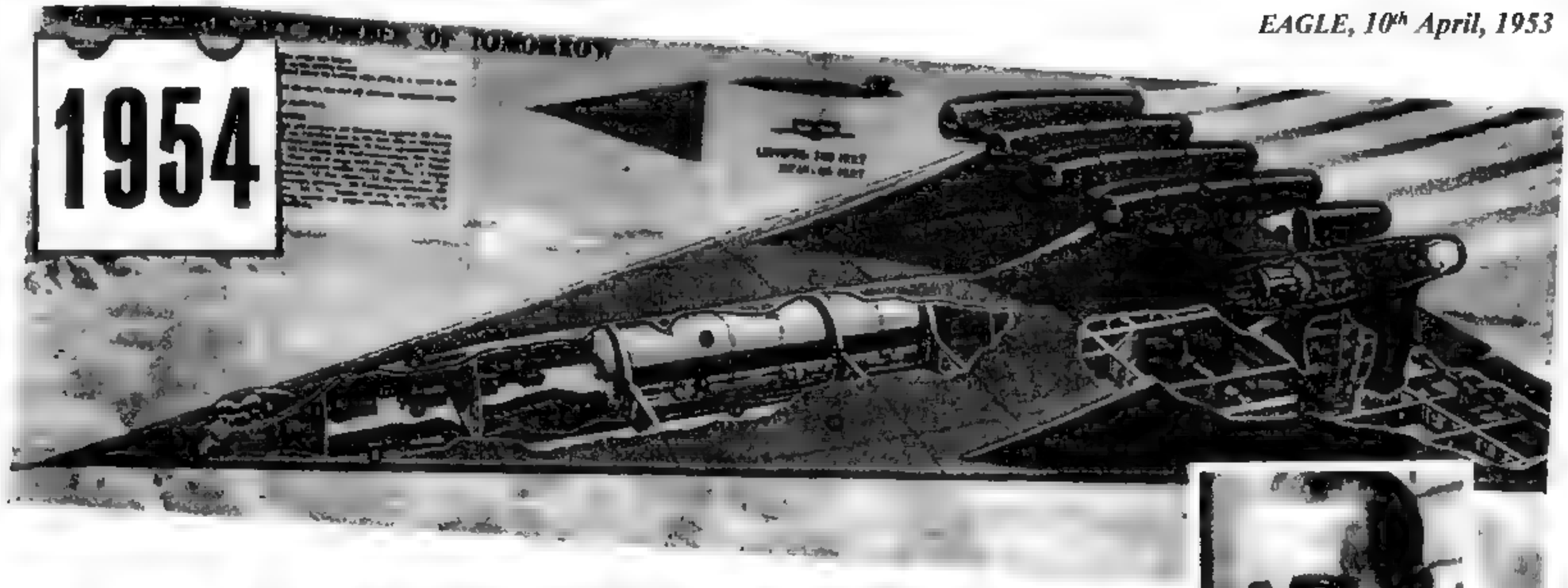
EAGLE, 13th February, 1960

EAGLE, 20th February, 1953

knowledge of the publication having apparently never been interviewed for a major newspaper, magazine or even a fan publication. So little is known about him even his date of birth is open to question. While the National Archives website states that it was 1913, and leaves his death a question mark, Steve Holland on the Bear Alley blog makes a good case for it actually being 1903. Whether he was 60 or 70 when he died, he left behind a legacy of incredibly detailed and accurate cutaway drawings published in the factual magazine *Modern Wonder/Modern World* before and at the start of the Second World War, in a series of hardback books published by Odhams in the 1940s, in *EAGLE* comic in the 1950s and 1960s, and finally in Benwig's *Inside Information* series of books published on the cusp of the 1970s. For *EAGLE* readers however, his 1950s cutaways using the top half of the comic's colour centrespread represent the pinnacle of his work.

Surprisingly photos of him are not that hard to find, with at least three being published in *EAGLE* over the course of its life. The first appears in Vol. 2, No. 1 (13th April, 1951) where he is pictured along with a few personal details in the article 'First Birthday! *EAGLE* is One Year Old.' In this he is referred to as "Ashwell Wood" while the article lists the comic's other contributors by both their Christian and surnames. While today we tend to think of "Ashwell Wood" as a double barrelled surname, this suggests that he was using Ashwell as a Christian name and that he was L. Ashwell Wood in the same way that 'Dan Dare' artist Bruce Cornwell is actually A. Bruce Cornwell. Having said that, there is surviving correspondence from *EAGLE* Editor Marcus Morris to him on the subject of a possible cutaway subject, which is dated September 1951 and addressed to "L. Ashwell-Wood Esq". While this was no doubt typed by a secretary, it uses a hyphen that is not normally seen and serves to continue the confusion over the exact use of his name. The 1951 photo also reveals that Wood included a self portrait of himself painting the actual centrespread 'How Eagle Is Produced' that was published in the same issue of *EAGLE*. This centrespread illustration, of an artist working at an angled art board on a table beside windows with an anglepoise lamp adding extra illumination, could well show Wood's own studio workspace.

Two later photos appear in *EAGLE* in the 1960s. The first of these is in the 'News From Eagle' editorial in Vol. 11, No. 7 (13th February, 1960) which, unusually, refers to him as "Leslie" and shows him at the wheel of the motor tug *Stackgarth*, which he would illustrate in the 'Tugs For Milford Haven' cutaway in Vol. 11, No. 20 (14th May, 1960). The second 1960s picture appears in the article 'Eagle is 15... And Still Flying High!' published in Vol. 16, No. 15 (10th April, 1965). If he had been born in 1913 then at the time this final photo was taken he would have been 52, yet it appears to show an older man looking more like 62 which in turn gives credence to 1903 being his birth date. This final article shows a then 11 year old cutaway entitled 'A Supersonic Jet Bomber Of Tomorrow' published in Vol. 5, No. 50 (10th December, 1954) which was not



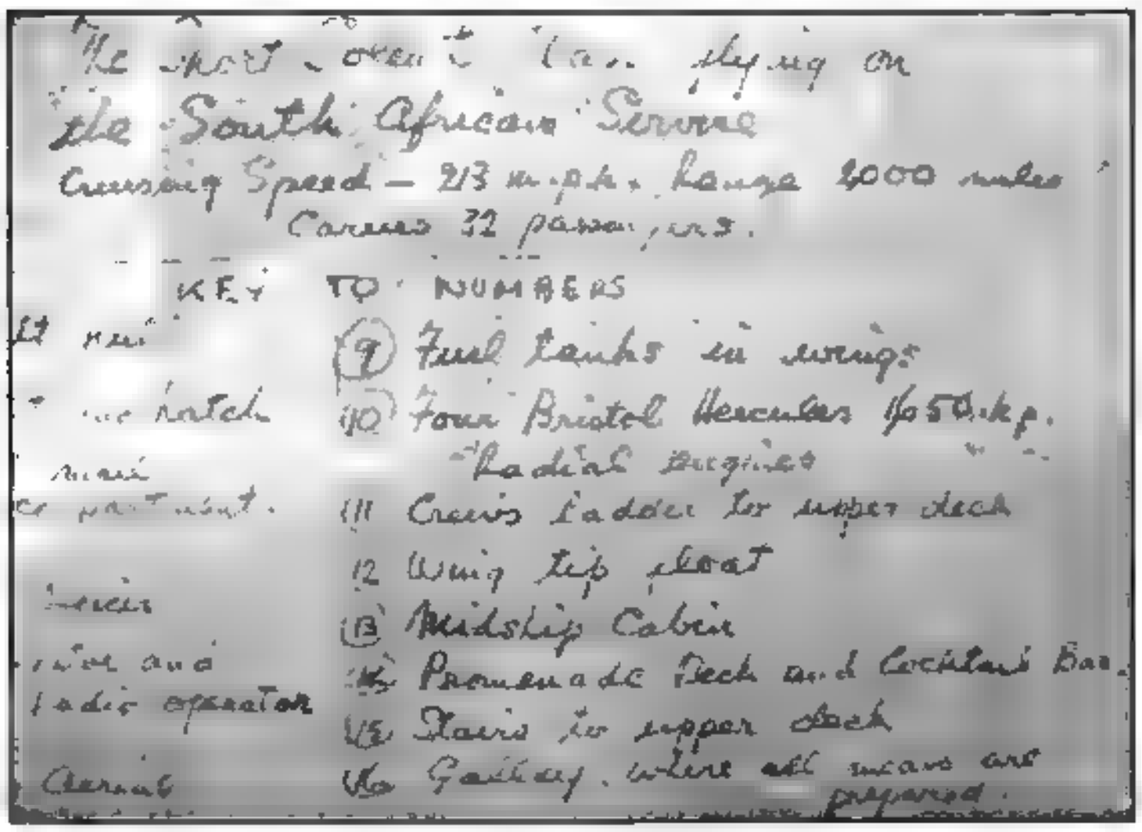
ALL things must change – except the quality of Ashwell Wood's drawings. His work appeared in the first issue and, 470 drawings later, also in the current issue. In 1954 he gave his impression of what tomorrow's six-engined jet bomber would look like. On page 15 is his cutaway of a Boeing B-70, and you can see how accurate he was.

really that similar, as the article suggested, to the "Boeing B-70" (actually a North American XB-70) published in that issue as 'World's Largest Bomber.'

As well as featuring him in articles throughout the comic's life, the editorial staff at *EAGLE* also recognised Wood's significance to the comic in his remuneration. The list of weekly payments to *EAGLE*'s contributors in 1954 shows that he was paid £42 per cutaway, plus an additional £2 2s per week for the 'Identification Parade' competition which ran for seven weeks. The only other cutaway artist to receive the same amount was Leslie Bowyer who provided two cutaways for Volume 4 while Hubert Redmill and R. Nicol were paid £36 15s per cutaway and Laurence Dunn and Gordon Davies were paid a relatively lowly £31 10s. Walkden Fisher was not a freelancer and so his cutaway work for that year was covered by his staff pay. Indeed Wood's pay was amongst the highest page rates for freelancers paid by *EAGLE* that year. Frank Humphris on 'Riders of the Range' was paid the most on £47 5s, with John Worsley on 'PC49' just behind on £47. D. Langdon was paid £45 for 'Professor Puff' (but that was for both writing and illustrating) while Martin Aitchison and Harry Winslade both got £42, Aitchison for 'Luck of the Legion' and Winslade for various Chad Varah scripted true stories such as 'The Conquest of Everest'. Desmond Walduck on 'Dan Dare' received the highest single payment that year, of £57 15s, but that was for two pages of artwork. For the 43 weeks of *EAGLE*'s fourth volume, Wood was paid over £1,000 for his work on the comic.

We know little about Leslie Ashwell Wood's personal history other than that which is mentioned in *EAGLE*. That 1951 article indicates that he was a "trained engineer" and a "one-time draughtsman in (an) aircraft company" while the 1960 editorial adds that he was a "designer-draughtsman for a famous aircraft company." It also indicates that he studied art, engineering and science, which it describes as "a rare combination." The two articles agree that his hobby was cricket and the second adds "scale-model making – when time permits." Cliff Wanford's *Eagle Collectors Handbook* states that the aircraft company that he worked for was Fairey Aviation and that he started there in 1936. Fairey was based at Hayes in Middlesex and designed mainly naval aircraft with perhaps the most famous being the Fairey Swordfish biplane torpedo bomber of the Second World War, two of which still fly with the Royal Navy Historic Flight today. Like so many British aviation companies, Fairey was part of the restructuring of the industry in the late 1950s and early 1960s when, along with Bristol Helicopters and Saunders-Roe, it was amalgamated into Westland, a company which survives to this day as the helicopter firm Agusta-Westland.

As a trained draughtsman, or technical illustrator, it would have been his job to provide engineering drawings (often referred to as blueprints) that showed both


The short Solent C.A. flying on
the South African Service
Cruising Speed – 213 m.p.h. Range 6000 miles
Carries 32 passengers.
KEY TO NUMBERS
(9) Fuel tanks in wings
(10) Four Bristol Hercules 1650 h.p. Radial engines
(11) Crew ladder to upper deck
12 Wing tip float
(13) Midship Cabin
(14) Promenade Deck and Cocktail Bar
(15) Stairs to upper deck
(16) Galley where all meals are prepared.

Leslie Ashwell Wood's handwriting – Short Solent cutaway

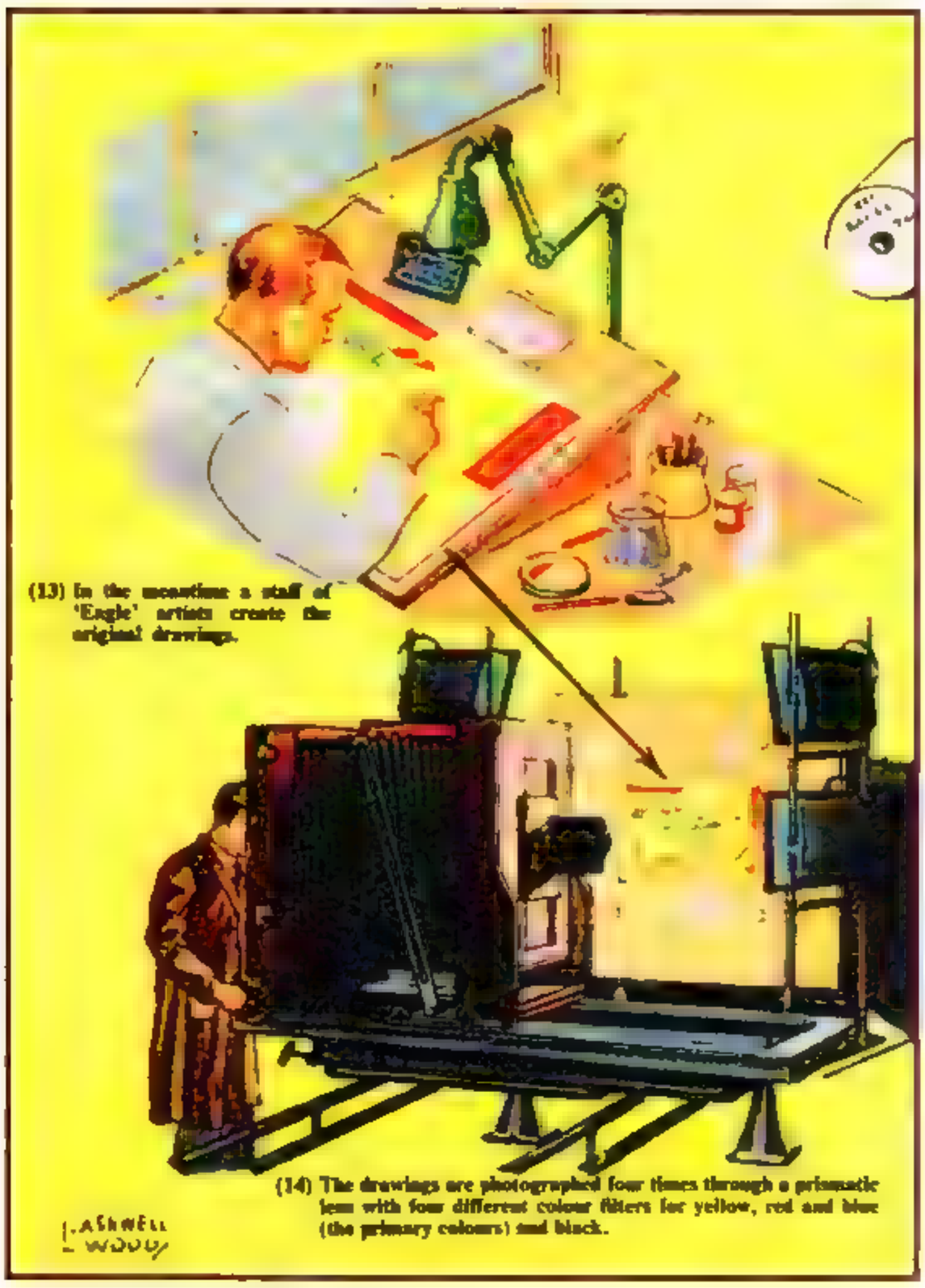
Modern Wonder

The weekly magazine *Modern Wonder*, published by Odhams and edited by H.T. Cauldwell, was a highly illustrated educational magazine for older children in a similar vein to the much later *Look and Learn*.

Modern Wonder Vol. 1, issue 1, was dated 22nd May, 1937 and its cover price of 2d gave the reader 16 foolscap pages of fact and fiction with some colour pages. The magazine soon changed to the larger tabloid size and from Vol. 6, No. 134 (9th December, 1939) changed its name to *Modern Wonders*. The final issue of *Modern Wonders* was Vol. 6, No. 148 (16th March, 1940) - the next week it became *Modern World* and restarted its number system back to Vol. 1, No. 1. *Modern World* ran for 54 issues during which time the price went up to 2½d and the page count went down to 12 pages. The final issue was Vol. 2, No. 54 (29th March, 1941) published at a time when many comics and magazines were being cancelled due to strict paper rationing.

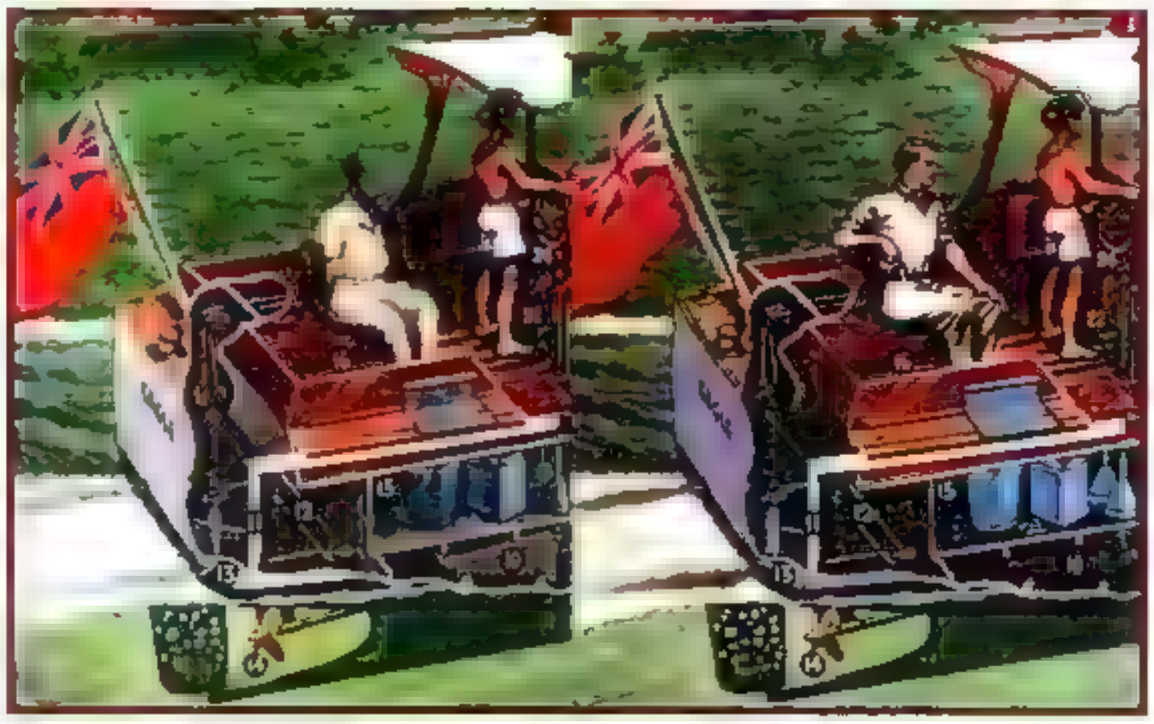
L. Ashwell Wood contributed to all three versions of the title with colour and black & white cutaways as well as other illustrations. His earliest known work for the title was 'Keeping the Shipping Channels Clear', which appeared on the back cover of Vol. 2, No. 31, dated 18th December, 1937. Collectors should be aware that not every issue after that contains artwork by Wood. ❑

third angle and isometric projections of an object. Third angle projections can show up to six plan views of the subject of the drawing (the four sides plus the top and bottom) while isometric projections show the subject at an angle to give the impression of 3-D on a flat page. While an artist would do this final version naturally, effectively by guesswork until it looks right, a draughtsman is trained to do it accurately, maintaining the exact size ratios and angles of the object from its third angle projection. This would explain why Wood's technical subjects look so accurate and why they have the level of detail that would be expected of a draughtsman but that an artist would rarely go into.

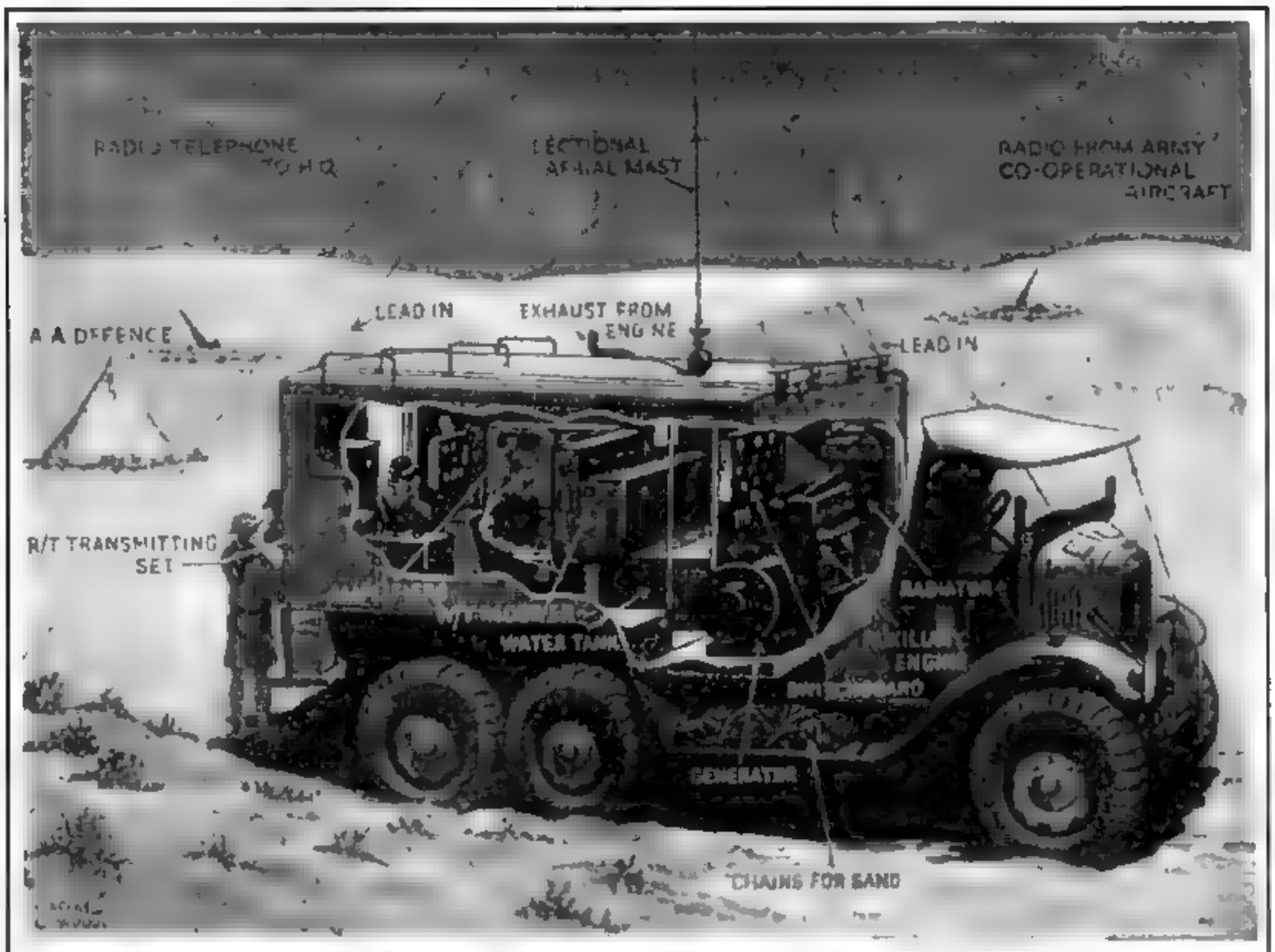

(13) In the meantime a staff of 'Eagle' artists create the original drawings.
(14) The drawings are photographed four times through a prismatic lens with four different colour filters for yellow, red and blue (the primary colours) and black.
L. ASHWELL WOOD

EAGLE, 13th April, 1951

Indeed the accuracy of his illustrations is rarely questioned although it has to be said that much of the internal detail particularly of the military subjects must have, at the time, been educated guesswork and it is to his credit that more than half a century later it remains plausible looking. Graham Perry's book *Flying People: Bringing You Safe Flying Every Day*, published by Kea Publishing in 2004, relates the story of Wood being arrested by police under the Official Secrets Act due to the internal detail that he included in the cutaway of the English Electric P1.B. This was the prototype of the British fighter plane that was eventually called the Lightning and the cutaway was published in *EAGLE* Vol. 9, No. 15 (11th April, 1958) as 'New Supersonic Jet Fighter'. The book goes on to say that



Art replacement - "original art" cf EAGLE, 20th June, 1952



A MOBILE WIRELESS VAN OF DIVISIONAL SIGNALS

These vehicles help to maintain communications between mobile ground units. They also keep in touch with their supporting aircraft. Their sets have a radius up to about 100 miles

Mobile Wireless Van - Odham's Britain's Modern Army

Wood successfully persuaded the authorities that the internal detail in his painting was an educated guess based on his previous experience as a draughtsman for an aircraft company rather than as the result of industrial espionage by himself or others. While this arrest story could quite possibly be apocryphal, in their book *Living with Eagles*, published by Lutterworth Press in 1998, Marcus Morris' daughters, Sally Morris and Jan Hallwood, in relation to Wood's cutaways mention that their father received several D-Notices from the government attempting to prevent what were considered to be military secrets being published in illustrations in a children's comic.

Yet despite apparently having issues with some of his later work, the Government did use his drawing abilities. The United Kingdom National Archives holds 6 examples of Wood's paintings for the nation, one in colour and five in black and white. The colour painting (INF3/1487) is of a King George V class battleship and, while it is not a cutaway, it is an earlier version of the cutaway that appears in the Odhams book *Britain's Glorious Navy* published in 1943. The four black and white paintings (INF3/1579-1583) are diagrammatical presentations of various army tactics - 'Infantry Section Clearing A House', 'Attack By A Combined Arms Battle-Group', 'Fighting Abilities Of The M4 Sherman Tank', 'The Use Of Artillery', and 'Infantry Weapons'. The Archives' online exhibition 'The Art Of War' described these black and white illustrations as "probably commissioned for an information pamphlet or book and would have been captioned to correspond with the numbers on the illustration" and they were not used in the Odhams military themed books that were published during wartime. The paintings are listed by the Archives as coming from the Ministry of Information and, since the subjects of all the paintings date from the Second World War, it therefore seems reasonable to assume that Wood worked for the Ministry of Information during that time as it is unlikely that the Ministry would have commissioned work from freelancers during wartime. This war work would not have been that unusual as other *EAGLE* cutaway artists used their drawing skills for the war effort with Laurence Dunn in the Admiralty Naval Intelligence Division while Hubert Redmill was in the Air Intelligence branch of MI6.

As well as these six paintings in the National Archive, many of Wood's cutaway paintings from *EAGLE* still survive today in the hands of collectors and they show off his mastery of perspective and the incredible level of detail that he put into so much of his work. While the 1950s centrespread cutaways were printed in the comic 20in long and 7in tall (51 x 18cm), his original art was painted "half up" and measured 30in long and 10in tall (76 x 25cm). The circular numbers that link each section back to the 'Key To How It Works'-table were painted directly on the artwork rather than being created individually and stuck on to the original art or being added in the comic's production process. In addition he would paint certain sections of some of the paintings separately and then stick them onto the final art board, either to cover mistakes on the original boards or to achieve specific effects that he thought might not necessarily work to his satisfaction on the first attempt.

Two books containing reproductions of large numbers of his cutaways have been published: *The Eagle Book of Cutaways* published by Webb & Bower in 1988, and the more recent *Eagle Annual of The Cutaways* published by Orion Books in 2008. This newest book shows an example of art replacement in its two reproductions of the '31ft Cabin Cruiser' (appropriately named *Eagle*) from Vol. 3 No. 11 (20th June, 1952). The printed version of the artwork reproduced on pages 62 & 63 shows the father figure sitting at the stern of the boat watching his son steering. However the original artwork is reproduced as part of the book's frontispiece and is missing the final version of the father, instead showing what is left of the original figure of the father, parts of which have been

painted out to allow the reworked figure to be stuck over the top, an addition that has since disappeared. A considerably larger section of the Fairey Gannet aircraft in 'The Royal Navy's Twin Turbo-Prop Aircraft' from Vol. 3, No. 44 (6th February, 1953) was added. In this case Wood painted almost the entire sky and part of the sea as a separate section and then stuck it onto the original artboard. As the area of the board under this sky section is not painted it seems logical to presume that he was wary of achieving the subtle cloud effect on the original board and therefore did it on a separate board, only sticking it onto the main board once he was happy with his work.

The majority of his surviving *EAGLE* artwork from this period is on long narrow boards trimmed very close to the painting; however this was not always the way that they were delivered to the *EAGLE* offices. A cropped photo in the back of the *EAGLE* book *The Happy Warrior* shows Marcus Morris examining Wood's original art board for 'Round The World Diesel Tramp Ship' published in Vol. 1, No. 22 (8th September, 1950). This board retains an additional area under the painting on which Wood's hand written notes for the cutaway's key are just visible. At least one original art board, the Short Solent 'A Typical British Flying Boat' from Vol. 1, No. 17 (4th August, 1950), retains these hand written pencil notes to this day.

What was also unknown until recently was how he created such detailed art. Did he sketch the design directly onto the board in pencil and then paint directly over his original pencils or did he create the pencils separately and transfer them to the board? A selection of Ashwell-Wood's pencil prelims from *Modern Wonder*, the Odhams books and *EAGLE* have recently surfaced which shows that he did indeed make separate highly detailed pencil sketches throughout his career, although to refer to them merely as sketches does the artwork a severe injustice. Amongst this selection of his work was the preliminary pencil sketch for 'Ships of the Royal Navy – A First Class Destroyer' that was published in *EAGLE* Vol. 1, No. 46 (23rd February, 1951) - this is reproduced in the centre-spread of this issue of *Eagle Times*, pages 26-27.

This cutaway is an illustration of the Royal Navy's Battle class destroyer *H.M.S. St. Kitts* travelling at full steam and laying a smoke screen for the larger warship behind her. *St. Kitts* was built at Swan Hunter on the Tyne where she was launched on 4th October, 1944 and finally commissioned on 21st January, 1946. Too late to take part in World War II, she was part of the Royal Navy's Coronation Review at Spithead in 1953 and in 1955 took part in the Suez Crisis during which, appropriately enough, she acted as destroyer escort for the aircraft carrier *H.M.S. Eagle*. *St. Kitts* was decommissioned in 1957 and finally scrapped in Sunderland in 1962.

Marcus Morris - from The Happy Warrior

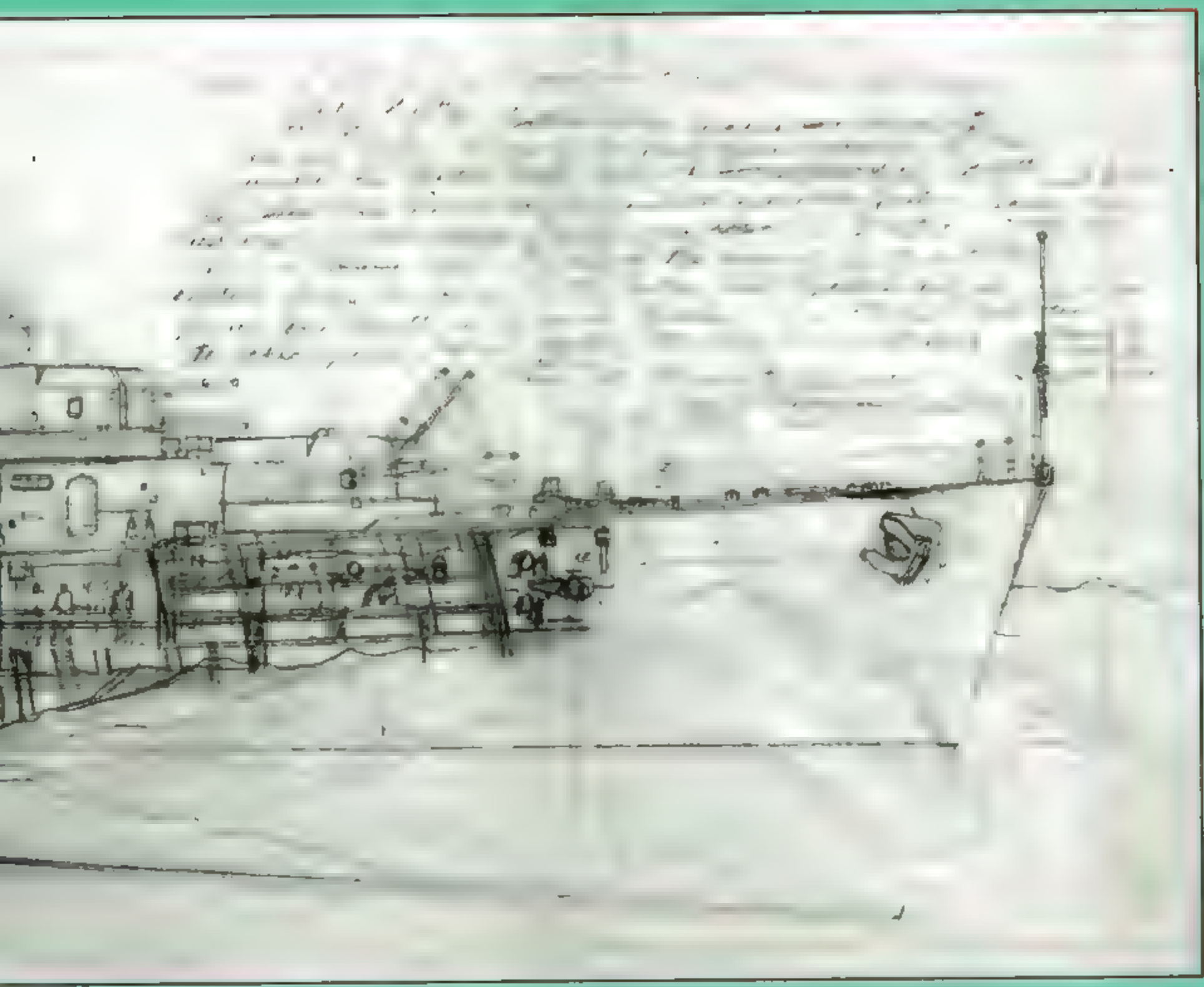
These original pencils for the *H.M.S. St. Kitts* cutaway are 30in long and 10in tall, the same as the finished artwork would have been, and show amazing attention to detail. While the prelim has the cutaway's key numbers on it, they are slightly different to the final printed version and the sketch does not have a key to them. What it does have are several versions of the explanatory text used in the comic. Indeed it shows that Wood had several attempts at getting the text finalised before settling on the version that was printed. This shows that, for this example at least, the text used on the cutaways was written by the artist rather than a writer or one of the *EAGLE* editorial team.

Leslie Ashwell Wood's *EAGLE* cutaways are often quoted by former *EAGLE* readers as being one of the highlights of the comic. The discovery, finally, of a preliminary pencil sketch for one of them has thrown a little more light on the man and just how he created these remarkable illustrations. ❑

With thanks to Bruce Cornwell, Steve Holland, Gerald Palmer, Richard Sheaf, John Swan and Cliff Wanford.

Editor's Note: Due to lack of space, a number "box outs" provided by Jeremy have been omitted. An addendum will follow in the next issue of *Eagle Times*, covering the publication of Ashwell Wood illustrations in Odhams' books, the *Inside Information* series, and in foreign publications.

Preparatory sketch HMS St Kitts (D18) by Leslie Ashwell Wood ..... an



...and ..... the "cutaway" as it appeared in EAGLE (23rd February 1951)

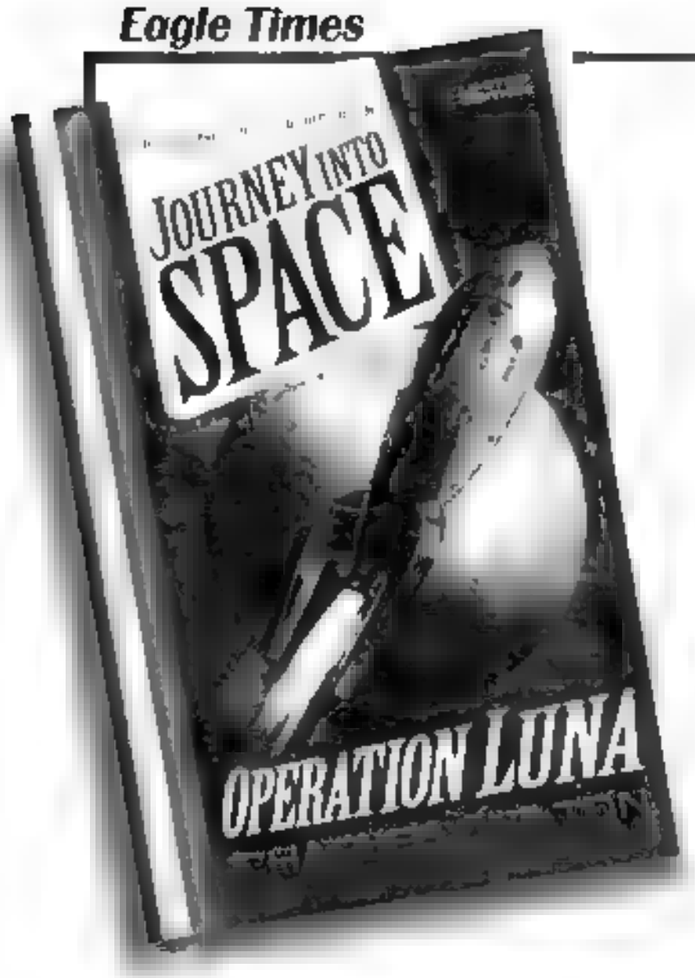
This is the St. Kitts laying a screen with special funnel smoke to conceal the movements of the big ships. She belongs to the "Battle" Class. Group 1. Her funnel band denotes a divisional leader. She is 397 feet long and her two Admiralty-type boilers supply steam to the turbines which develops 50,000 shaft horse power at 31 knots. Crew 235. Displacement fully loaded 3,200 tons.

KEY TO BELOW DECKS

(1) Capstan room. (2) Crew's quarters. (3) Gun ammunition trunks. (4) Stokers' quarters. (5) Crew's mess. (6) Stoker Petty Officers' mess. (7) Dispensary and sick bay. (8) Transmitting room. This is the "brains" of the ship where all ranges, fire control and bearings are worked out. (9) Naval stores. (10) Oil fuel tanks. (11) Forward boiler room. (12) Boiler uptakes to single funnel. (13) After boiler room. (14) Starboard turbine engine room. (15) Control platform. (16) Officers' cabins. (17) Starboard propeller.

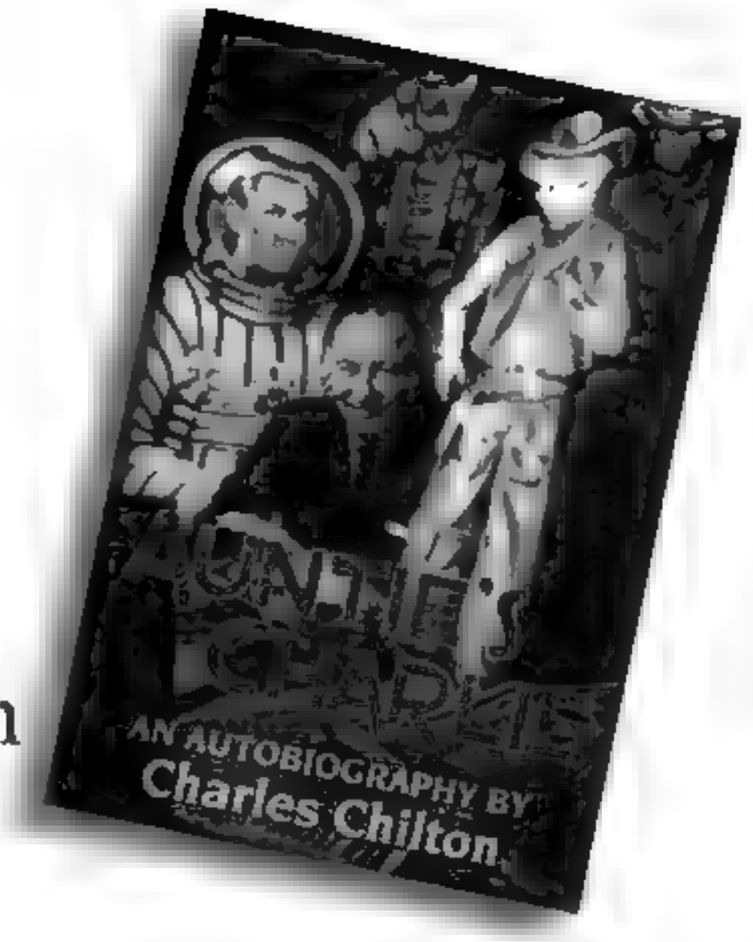
KEY TO ABOVE DECK

(18) Depth charge throwers. (19) Multiple 40 m.m. A.A. guns. (20) After torpedo tubes (five). (21) Amidships torpedo tubes (five). (22) Radio aerials. (23) 40 m.m. A.A. guns. (24) Radio antenna. (25) Radar scanner. (26) Range finder and fire control top. (27) Searchlight. (28) Navigating bridge. (29) Radio aerial. (30) Galley. (31) Petty Officers' mess. (32) Twin 4.5 in. guns, can be elevated to 55 degrees.



Journey into Space with Auntie's Charlie

Will Grenham reports on the Charles Chilton Books Launch



Auntie's Charlie, the autobiography of Charles Chilton, MBE, was published in August by the media company Fantom Films, along with a new reprint edition of *Journey into Space: Operation Luna*, the first of Charles' own adaptations of his famous radio serial.

I have heard that Charles had been looking for a publisher for his autobiography for some time, which is surprising considering the man's extraordinarily prodigious career and list of achievements. Howard Corn writes in the 'Postbag' section of this issue of *Eagle Times* how the *Eagle Society* played a part in the story of how the book eventually came to be published. When asked by Charles' wife, Penny, if the Society would like to publish it, Howard replied that although we would like to, the Society did not have the resources to do it properly. However, a mention by Howard to writer Charles Norton then resulted in the subsequent interest by Fantom Films. It turns out that not only were Fantom Films interested in producing Charles' autobiography, but also have decided to republish all three of Charles' *Journey into Space* novels, beginning with *Operation Luna*, which was first published in 1954, but which has been out of print for over 40 years.

Both *Auntie's Charlie* and *Journey into Space:Operation Luna* have been published as Limited Edition hardbacks of 200 numbered copies each. They are nicely bound, with dustjackets. The second *Journey into Space* novel, *The Red Planet*, will follow in November this year and the final volume, *The World in Peril*, will follow that in February 2012.

A number of *Eagle Society* members were in attendance at the Books Launch, which was held at the George IV Public House and Comedy Club in Chiswick (London) on 20th August. The invitation was open to those pre-ordering the book(s). Not surprisingly, the enthusiastic audience included *Journey into Space* fans, *EAGLE*/'Riders of the Range' fans and members of the Goon Show Preservation Society, amongst others. As I arrived at the venue, just a few minutes after 16:00 for an event advertised as "Doors Open at 16:00, First Panel starts at 16:15", it was disappointing to find as I entered the room that the interview had already begun. Howard arrived just after me, and still before 16:15. However, I think we missed very little.

It was good to hear Charles Chilton talk again (in 1995 he was guest at the *Eagle Society* gathering at Bath. More recently, in 2009, he was Guest of Honour at the Muswell Hill gathering - though I personally missed the latter occasion). Charles, who is now a sprightly 94 years old, was accompanied by his wife Penny.

Charles reminisced fondly about many aspects of his life and times, as writer, presenter and producer, taking in *The Goon Show*, *Journey into Space*, *Riders of the Range*, and many others. When asked to name the accomplishment of which he was most proud, he said it was as the writer of *Oh, What a Lovely War*, the critique of the First World War, which was famously first staged by the Theatre Workshop in 1963. He also told how he had struggled to get his name reinstated to the credits after it disappeared following the show's critical success in 1963.

After the interview, Charles was presented with the first copy of *Auntie's Charlie*. Copies of the pre-bought books were then distributed to the attendees and we were able to have our copies personally signed by Charles.

Charles Chilton (right) being interviewed

Charles is presented with the first copy of his book

In *Auntie's Charlie* Charles tells of his birth into poverty during the First World War, and how he grew up as a cockney lad in Bloomsbury, brought up by his grandmother after his father died at the Battle of Arrass and his mother died when he was just 6 years old. Charles had a poor education - at the St Pancras Church of England Elementary School: "As it was a church school we received a lot of religious instruction, though I can't say we received a good education."

He tells how he developed a love of cinema, how this played a part in him not ending up in Borstal and how being in the Boys' Brigade helped his development and education.

His career with the BBC began in 1933, at the age of 15. Charles credits the BBC as "my university, my music college, my introduction to literature and drama and the place where I was able to develop the skills necessary to become a writer and producer of programmes". He started as as a messenger boy and went on to become a leading writer, producer and presenter of programmes and (according to the flyleaf) "described by the *Sunday Telegraph* as 'the one genius the BBC ever had on its staff' ". He tells a fascinating story with frequent dips into fascinating detail. But many of his readers will wish he could cover their particular area of interest in greater depth.

Journey into Space: Operation Luna is an adaptation of first *Journey into Space* radio serial, first published in 1954, three years before the launch of Sputnik. As I write this I have started to re-read it after not having read it for many years. The structure of *Operation Luna* is different from that of the radio play, although the main story line, as I recall, is the same. Charles manages to include lots of scientific detail and writes about space travel in a thoroughly convincing way. Suspend the last 60 years. This is how it could have been.

It's true, what Howard had said. With our limited resources the *Eagle Society* could not have done these books full justice. In my view, Fantom Films certainly has. They are Limited Editions. Get them while you can! ❑

Charles about to open his book

Auntie's Charlie (ISBN: 978-1-906263-72-0) published August 2011. Hard-back Limited Collectors' Edition (200 copies). £24.99 (UK), £27.99 (abroad).

Available from fantom films:
www.fantomfilms.co.uk/books/charles_chilton.htm

Journey into Space: Operation Luna (ISBN: 978-1-906263-73-7) published August 2011. Hard-back Limited Collectors' Edition (200 copies). £12.99 (UK) £14.99 (abroad)

Journey into Space:The Red Planet (ISBN: 978-1-906263-74-4) to be published November 2011. Hard-back Limited Collectors' Edition (200 copies). £12.99 (UK) £14.99 (abroad)

Journey into Space: The World in Peril (ISBN: 978-1-906263-75-1) to be published February 2012. Hard-back Limited Collectors' Edition (200 copies). £12.99 (UK) £14.99 (abroad)

A subscription for all three *Journey into Space* books is available at £34.99 (UK) £39.99 (abroad)

Further details on the Fantom Films website:
www.fantomfilms.co.uk/books/journeyintospace.htm

Charles signing copies of his books

Working with David Hunt

by

Alan Vince

Alan recalls the years when he worked closely with the "veteran" Fleetway stalwart David (Dave) Hunt; and the numerous "new" Eagle and 'Dan Dare' projects they produced together.

My very first encounter with David Hunt couldn't have been less likely to produce a close working partnership than Nick Clegg trying to impress a meeting of the Labour Party. It was shortly after the launch of the "new" *Eagle* in March, 1982 that David, as Editor, and Barrie Tomlinson, as Group Editor, had been invited to address a gathering of the Society of Strip Illustration (SSI) at the Press Club in London. Another such guest was Alastair Crompton, who talked about his proposed book on Frank Hampson. Sadly, in Alastair's case, many of the audience drifted away to the bar but with Hunt and Tomlinson it was a very different matter. The new *Eagle* featured not only drawn strips but photo strips and this was like a red rag to a bull to artists who were trying to make a living from their art.

Both David and Barrie defended their decision to use photo strips, but had quite a rough ride with SSI members. By the end of the evening both men seemed to make a quick exit, which was a shame as Keith Watson had hoped to have a chat with Dave Hunt about his script writer on the *Eppo* football strip, 'Roel Dijkstra'. The two collaborators had never met and Keith walked over to introduce himself, only to find David, rather hurriedly, say "Nice to meet you, Keith – must dash…bye." We were both a little disappointed not to have a chance to talk further with the *Eagle* Editor but, I suppose, it was getting late and David had to get home to his wife and he was not a big fan of the railways.

David Hunt

David Hunt was born in London in 1945 and, as a young boy, had a paper round in the East End. Thanks to his paper round Dave got to see, for free, many of the D.C. Thomson comics of the time. Titles like *Rover*, *Victor*, and *Hotspur* fired his imagination and also helped with his composition skills at school. English was one of his favourite subjects and a career as a writer seemed on the cards for him. Dave much preferred the text papers for boys, which only used one illustration per story, and he became determined that this was the future for him. He wrote to many newspapers, magazine publishers and companies for a job and was fortunate to get a reply from Fleetway Publications in Farringdon Street. Dave was, at the age

of 16, taken on as office junior in October, 1961, and developed a real love of the titles produced there. Later he he got a chance to join the staff of *Tiger* and went on to *Battle Picture Weekly*.

David's abilities were soon recognised and he began to move up the ladder in the Fleetway organisation. The (then) Editorial Director John Sanders introduced him to two creative writers, Pat Mills and John Wagner, and together they brought about a reality change to the new titles in the group. As a skilled writer himself Dave Hunt is quick to acknowledge the talents of others and has always felt fortunate to have worked with so many gifted people. In my dealings with him I was always aware that Dave's background in comics was not *EAGLE* or *Express Weekly* and that, while fully appreciating good strip art, his particular field was more the written word and editorial skills. With the latter he was a real trouper.

Ever since the demise of our beloved (original) *EAGLE* there had been a lot of talk about a "new" version of the famous magazine. Like the 'Dan Dare' films and TV series nothing ever seemed to come from these ideas. I've lost count of the number of times a friend has called me up, going back to the seventies, and said "A new *EAGLE* is on its way... we should have news later in the year!" Well we'll all grow a lot older before that happens I used to think. Then there was the awful 1977 'Dan Dare' in *2000AD*, more disappointment and depression for Frank Hampson. I'm sure Frank Bellamy had drawn a 'Dan Dare' cover for a proposed relaunch of *EAGLE* but that also fizzled out. It was 1978 that two SSI members, Nick Landau and Kevin O'Neill, suggested to IPC I would be the ideal person to write two pieces for a *2000AD Sci-Fi Special*. The first commission was to be a double page, full colour, article on Frank Bellamy and the 'Dan Dare' strip. The

The Team behind the "new" Eagle at it's launch in London, March, 1982. Dave Hunt (second from left, front row), John Jackson (second left , back row), The Mekon (centre) and Barrie Tomlinson(extreme right, back row)

DAN AND DIGBY WERE IN ONE OF THE ROCKET PROBES LAUNCHED BY THE SPACESHIP RANGER AT THE MYSTERY PLANET
THAT MEANS FIGHTING ON TWO PLANETS!
AND THE FIRST PHASE OF THE EARTH PLAN CALLS FOR THE CAPTURE OF THE MOON TO ESTABLISH TELEZERO STATIONS
AS THE TREEN GENERALS PREPARED TO LAUNCH AN INVASION OF EARTH
DAN AND HIS COMPANIONS WERE ATTACKED BY THE GREEN-SKINNED VENUSIANS AND TAKEN TO MEKONTA CAPITAL OF NORTHERN VENUS
SURPRISE!!
FOR KARGAZ AND THE EARTH!
AND LED THE ATLANTINES IN REVOLT AGAINST THEIR MASTERS THE MEKON WAS BELIEVED KILLED IN THE FIGHTING
SOON THE VENUS-EARTH FOOD SERVICE WAS ESTABLISHED FOR HIS PART IN SAVING EARTH DA WAS AWARDED THE ORDER OF THE UNITED NATION
THERE DAN FIRST MET THE TREENS RULER - THE SUPREME SCIENTIST THE MEKON
DAN FORMED AN ALLIANCE WITH THE MEKON'S ENEMIES THE GENTLE THERONS

My very first commission for Dave: four pages of original 'Dan Dare' artwork were used to tell the story of Dan's background

second was to write a short piece on the Mekon, which would be illustrated by Keith Watson's wonderful front page from the sixties *EAGLE*. My two features were happily accepted by the *2000AD* editor and I made my first visit to their headquarters in London, the impressive King's Reach Tower in Stamford Street, close to the South Bank National Theatres. It was while I was in the *2000AD* offices that I got the impression that there was no hope of a revival of *EAGLE* with these people. One chap, I think his name was Kelvin Gosnell, was sitting at a desk which had a glass top on which was the original *EAGLE*'s logo. "Nothing would give me greater pleasure" smiled Kelvin "than to scratch '*2000AD* Rules' on this desk." Outside the offices were some Bellamy 'Ghost World' originals with large black crosses over the images. Why was this done? I wondered. I also spotted a few Frank Hampson 'Dan Dares', which appeared to have been claimed by someone at IPC.

But in 1982 there seemed to be more positive news of an *EAGLE* relaunch. My local paper, which had often asked me about my interests in *EAGLE* and 'Dan Dare', wanted to know if I thought this time the "New *EAGLE*" would take off. I replied it would have to reach a very high standard to compare, favourably, with the 1950s original…but I always lived in hope! The trouble was they illustrated the piece with a picture of a 1967 *EAGLE* and not one from the more memorable years.

IPC/Fleetway's Group Editor, Barrie Tomlinson, got together with Gil Page, the

IN THE END THE MEKON WAS BEATEN, BUT EARTH FACED ANOTHER CRISIS FROM THE COSMORES AND THEIR PHANTOM FLEET
THESE WERE SMALL AQUATIC ALIENS LOOKING FOR NEW PLANETS TO COLONISE. THEIR CLUSTARSHIPS JAMMED COMMUNICATIONS THROUGHOUT THE SOLAR SYSTEM! EVENTUALLY A FEW OF THEM WERE ALLOWED TO SETTLE IN EARTH'S OCEANS.
MORE ADVENTURES AWAITED DAN - LIKE HIS GREAT EXPEDITION TO TERRA NOVA IN THE GALACTIC GALLEON. THEN, ON THE RETIREMENT OF SIR HUBERT HE TOOK OVER AS SPACE FLEET CONTROLLER.
SO THE FILE ON THE OLD DAN DARE IS CLOSED. NOW I WILL DEAL WITH THE LATEST MEMBER OF DARE BROOD AND THIS TIME I SHALL NOT FAIL!
32

Keith Watson's cover for the Dan Dare Holiday Special. A little ruined by rather poor strips

Managing Editor, and planned a new publication. Dave Hunt was asked to be editor and so the "creative" team got to work. A very lavish launch was arranged at London's Waldorf Hotel in the Aldwych on 17th March, 1982. They even had the Mekon there, courtesy of Pip Warwick. Gerry Embleton had been signed up as the new 'Dan Dare' artist and David had around him a strong team to produce the new title. "In fact," recalls David, "I probably had twice as many people working on the *Eagle* than I would normally have."

With hindsight David admits that he was never 100% happy with all the contents of the new *Eagle*. He had been a great admirer of the original paper and felt certain features could have been bigger rather than treated as just fillers. One item he used to enjoy was a filler called 'Glamorous Teachers', in which schoolchildren would send photos of their favourite female teachers and the best would appear in print. "It was always a pleasure to look out for those in the post!" smiles David today.

At the time of the new *Eagle*'s launch I had only just lost my father so didn't take a lot of interest in how the title was doing, apart from attending the SSI meeting with Dave and Barrie as guests. It was also an excuse to catch up with Keith Watson whom I hadn't seen for a while due to my father's illness. Little did I think that before 1982 came to an end I would be seeing Dave Hunt again for a long association.

Now, personally, I have never been interested in the "new" versions of 'Dan

The "Daz and Omo" cover so disliked by Pat Mills. But the Kruels still looked a powerful bunch!

Dare'. Certainly not the thug created for *2000AD* and I know the time-travelling RAF Pilot of the Future was brought about by some TV/film deal that (surprise surprise) never came off. To me 'Dan Dare' was – and is – Frank Hampson's creation and the timeless spaceman so lovingly carried on by Keith Watson and Don Harley. So I never expected to hear from Dave Hunt again; he had his job to do and a new generation of children to entertain. After all, the real damage to Frank's copyright was done years before; Dave Hunt and his staff had nothing to do with that.

Then out of the blue, I had a request from Pat Mills, who was writing the 'Dan Dare' stories. Gerry Embleton had left and Ian Kennedy was now illustrating the *Eagle* strip. It wasn't Hampson, Harley, Bellamy or Watson. But both were good artists and on that front I had no complaints. Pat had been referred to me through Dave Hunt in order to help him with a couple of week's episodes that involved showing some of Dan's past. First off Pat requested I send him same size, black and white copies of every page of the very first 'Dan Dare' story – 154 copies in all. He wasn't concerned about seeing the artwork in colour as a reading story. I managed to get really good photocopies made, which were perfect for Pat's needs. IPC also picked up the bill, thankfully!

"This is fantastic material!" was Pat's reaction! "Frank Hampson was not only a brilliant artist but that first story was so well written." I know there has been some debate about just how much of the storylines, in those early adventures, was Frank's. All I can say is that he always insisted that he wrote the bulk of the first four 'Dan Dare' stories and Keith Watson rated Frank as *the* best artist and writer. I was then asked to come up with a selection of frames that best illustrated the original 'Dare' strips in the fifties *EAGLE*. As these "flashbacks" were only going to feature in two week's editions I had only four pages to play with – two back pages and one centrespread. Despite me wanting to feature 'The Red Moon Mystery', that was dropped and the bulk of the illustrations were chosen from the Venus story and 'The Man From Nowhere'/'Reign of the Robots' and that lovely view of the Cosmobes' Clustaship.

I remember Pat Mills being very keen on using the picture of the Treen being speared by one Atlantine while another holds up an axe. He was also insistent that we use the four frames showing the Mekon's "camps", the building of Nineveh and the testing of humans etc. Having settled on the twenty frames Dave Hunt asked me to do a quick layout for the pages and Pat and I wrote the captions to each. Having worked in commercial art and the print trade for many years I drew up "proper" layouts on detailed paper, showing bleeds and picture areas with caption blocks. It was then a question of gathering it all together, layouts, copy, *EAGLEs* and (where I had them) originals, and making my way up to London to deliver it all to Dave Hunt.

Dave's offices were quite high up at Kings Reach Tower and he had a lovely view across London. I had quite a surprise when I was introduced to the staff for one of them was John Jackson whom I had last met back in the early sixties when he was art editor of *EAGLE and Boys' World*. Dave called over one of his art staff and we went over my material. At first Dave's assistant said he would have to do the layout before we could get the colour copies made to paste up. "Why?" said Dave. "Alan's already done the layouts, we can use them as they are." At first I felt a little uneasy as it appeared I was trying to do the art staff's job for them. I feared I could cause a strike! But it was all O.K. and I went with the assistant to a nearby copy shop to have good quality prints made.

As part of a story called 'The Return of the Mekon' my pages appeared in the issues for the 4th and 11th December, 1982. Pat Mills wasn't happy with the cover for the 11th (which featured the four Kruels) and called the lettering and background "DAZ and OMO colouring"! I also asked about the credit for Frank Hampson and possibly some payment. It was, after all his creation and artwork. Dave and Pat agreed and Frank's name appeared for a short time in the credits. I also understood that a payment was sent to him but never had it confirmed by Frank or Dorothy.

On the final page of my "flashbacks" the Mekon says that the file on the old Dan Dare is now closed, so I thought that was that. I had helped a little to bring Frank's work to a new generation but, knowing IPC, it couldn't last, could it? I even got some "anonymous" critic who circulated a letter to interested parties accusing me of being a traitor to the cause. I, a supposed friend of Hampson, was dealing with the evil IPC! I never saw this letter but copies were sent to

Denis Gifford and Frank himself. Keith was sent one too, but told me he used it to try out his brush-pens. Charles Gunther asked me to reply, in part, so I did. Here I just stated a few facts: Dave Hunt, Pat Mills and Gil Page were not responsible for Frank's copyright troubles. O.K., John Sanders was a difficult person to deal with and he was happier sucking up to Marcus Morris. But it is easier to influence people like IPC/Fleetway from the inside than raging at them from the outside. Anyway I actually liked Dave Hunt as a person and it proved a useful outlet for my work as a freelance in the coming years. Nothing stays the same and I was far from finished as a contributor to the new *Eagle* and its link with the past.

My next commission from Dave Hunt was for a 1983 *Eagle Holiday Special*. There had been some good reaction to the earlier Hampson work published and Dave thought it would be nice to do a four page feature on 'Dan Dare' artists, from Frank Hampson to Ian Kennedy. Again he asked me to do the copy and supply the illustrations, which I did. The only things missing were pictures of Gerry Embleton (who has always been reluctant to send one in) and Desmond Walduck. But I managed to use photos of Frank and Don, Harold Johns, Keith Watson, Frank Bellamy and Ian Kennedy. It was also my first contact with Ian, who turned out to be a really nice chap. I was allowed to pick the pages from *EAGLE* to best illustrate 'Dan Dare' and I think I did pretty well. Only sad thing was it was all in black and white. But we did manage a similar feature, in colour, later on.

Dave Hunt always made it clear to me, in all my dealings with him, that his priorities were first and last his readers. As much as I would wish *Eagle*, in the eighties, was a true reflection of the *EAGLE* I grew up with, this wasn't the case. Times change and tastes change. People who created the 1950s *EAGLE* had come from a generation that had just gone through a war and had, in many cases, experienced the true horrors of that conflict. The use of violence and horror was now acceptable in comics – and films – and the new *Eagle* did feature a few more gruesome strips in later years. While planning the 1984 *Eagle Annual* Dave Hunt came up with a suggestion that I write a fan's view of the links between my *EAGLE* and the new version. Being fully aware that I couldn't rubbish Dave's publication in favour of the original I came up with a six page piece entitled 'The Everlasting Magic of Dan Dare and *Eagle*'. The pages were illustrated with some cutaways from the early *EAGLE*s, a page from the first 'PC49' strip, covers from the 1950s, 1960s and 1980s *Eagle* and (without a warning on the cover) two photos of me. One had to be retouched – and no, they didn't retouch me – because behind me on the wall was a 'Wicked Wanda' original where Wanda was exposing a little too much! Mind you the boys might have liked it.

Not every job I did for Dave was as easy and much pleasure as the 'Dan Dare'/*EAGLE*-related ones. A young model maker and special effects photographer named Julian Baum had sent in examples of his work to *Eagle* and it was decided to use some of his creations in the 'Dan Dare' strip in 1983. Dave thought it would be nice to give Julian a few colour pages in the 1985 *Annual* and asked me to write the copy. As I had no knowledge of the subject I had to locate the back issues quickly and contact Mr Baum. It all went well and everyone seemed pleased with the end result. I couldn't help thinking how Julian, in his photos, looked a lot like a younger version of my model-making friend Martin Bower!

Being the only contact for a publication called *Eagle*, Dave Hunt very often got queries and questions sent to him about the original *EAGLE*. Sometimes he would find the answers from the limited files that IPC had left over but very often he would pass them on to me. They came in the form of letters to identify a certain *EAGLE* strip or story or telephone calls to settle an argument in some office about the name of Dan Dare's first Treen friend. Magazine and book publishers wanted to borrow certain cutaways, mostly of cars, and I even had to send a page from 'Dan Dare' featuring the Clustaship, which was used in a book about spacecraft. All this was unpaid for the most part, but I didn't mind as Dave Hunt, on my visits to him, nearly always took me out to lunch. Sometimes to the IPC dining hall, other times to his favourite Chinese, or the nearby pub.

My next commission from Dave was to involve me much more in the production of an annual. Dave called me up one evening and asked if I would come up with some ideas for a 1987 *Dan Dare Annual* – as quickly as possible. Time was short and he had quite a few pages to fill.

To be continued ❑

The Rivals of Jeff Arnold No 8

Kit Carson

by Cowhand Horn

Christopher Houston "Kit" Carson was born on Christmas Eve, 1809, in Madison County, Kentucky. His Father Lindsey had married twice and had 15 children by the two wives. Kit was number eleven, but number two from the second wife.

When eight years old Kit's father was killed by a falling tree and he had to give up school and work on the farm. Their land was owned by the sons of Daniel Boone with whom they socialized and inter-married.

Apprenticed to a saddlemaker at fourteen, Kit soon became bored and left home at sixteen to live the life of a trapper. He was involved in the Mexican-American War of 1846-48 and after this became a rancher in New Mexico.

He met up with an Arapaho Indian woman called Waa-Nide, which means "Singing Grass", who also had an admirer in a French Canadian called Joseph Chouinard. Carson fought a duel with him and finished up married to Singing Grass. They had two children but after the birth of the second child, Singing Grass caught a fever and died. Later he met another Indian girl called Making-Our-Road, a Cheyenne, and started a relationship, but it did not last and she left him to go back to her tribe.

With the coming of the Civil War Carson was back as a rancher but he joined the Union and set up the New Mexico volunteer infantry, where he had the rank of colonel.

With the slack caused by the Civil War, Kit was given the job of moving the Navajo Indians onto a reservation as they had been making trouble. Kit had learned seven different Indian languages and they came in useful when negotiating with the natives.

The Navajo refused to go, but by cutting off their supply lines, Carson managed to get 8,000 of them to move onto the reservation. The rest went their own way.

With the Civil War over, Carson went back to ranching and met up with a small Mexican girl called Josefa Jaramillo. She was only 14 but Kit married her after being baptized in the Catholic faith. They had eight children but after the birth of the last one, Josefa, like Singing Grass, caught a fever and died.

Once again Kit was on his own and moved to New Mexico, again.

Kit Carson

He died aged 58 and was buried next to his wife in Taos, New Mexico.

Over 25 books have been written about Carson including one by our own Geoffrey Bond in his series of real life heroes.

Films have also been made. Between 1903 and 1928 four films were made in the silent mode and this was followed in 1933 by a serial called *Fighting with Kit Carson*. In 1940 *Kit Carson* was made followed by *The Return of Kit Carson* in 1947. Walt Disney also portrayed the cowboy with a film called *Kit Carson and Mountain Men* in 1977.

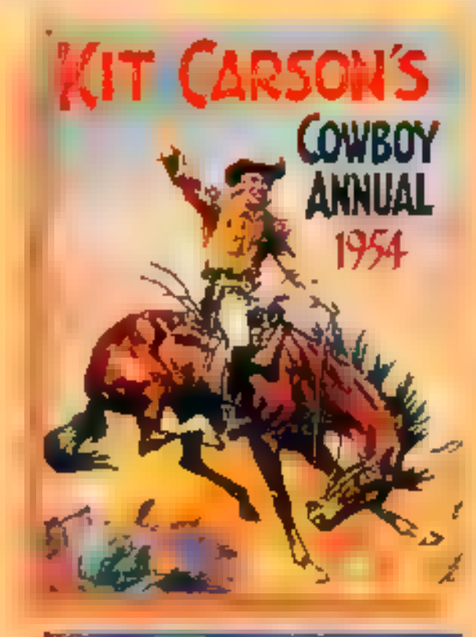
So what did we have in the UK comic strip field?

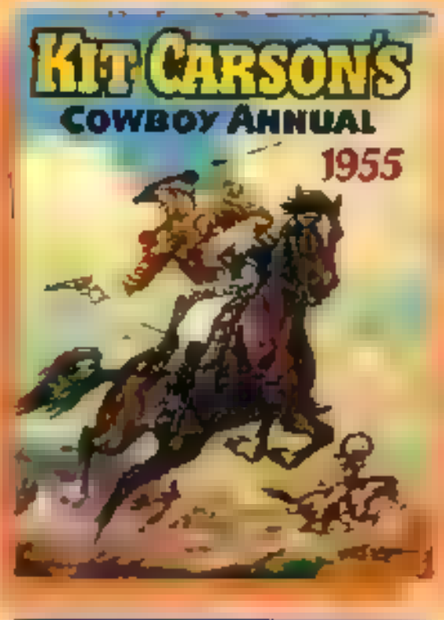
In 1950 Amalgamated Press started a series of pocket book publications called *Cowboy Comics* that changed their name to *Cowboy Picture Library* from issue 205. Almost 500 issues were published between April 1950 and September 1962. This series would feature not only 'Kit Carson', but 'Buck Jones', 'Tim Holt', 'The Cisco Kid', 'Billy the Kid', 'Buffalo Bill', 'Lucky Lannagan', 'Davy Crockett' and 'The Kansas Kid'.

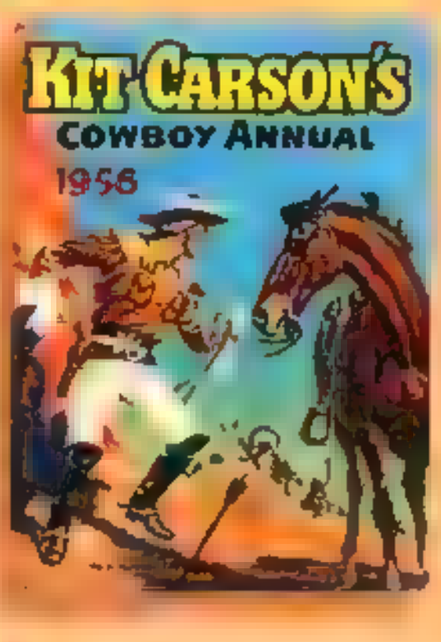
These little books gave an opportunity to many artists. Every issue contained 64 pages, each page containing two large frames. The price went from 7d in 1950 to 1/- in the sixties.

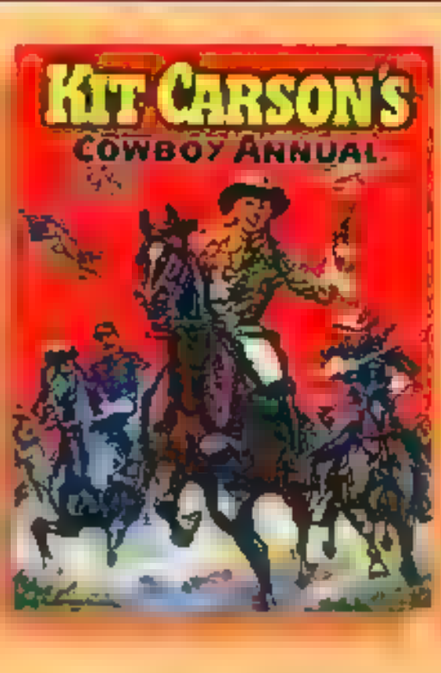
On the comic front, *Comet* gave space to 'Kit Carson' from 1950, with much of the art coming from Geoff Campion.

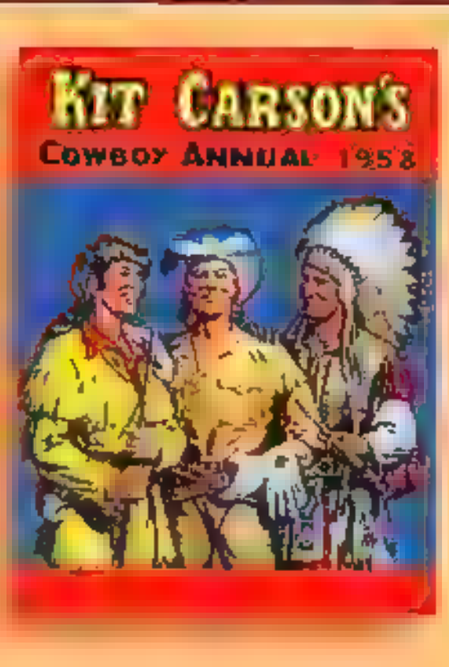
Amalgamated Press also produced a *Kit Carson Annual* from 1954 to 1960. These annuals contained colour strips in the "dot" production style, and black and white strips. Around six glossy, full colour illustrations made up the annuals, many of them drawn by Derek Eyles. ❑

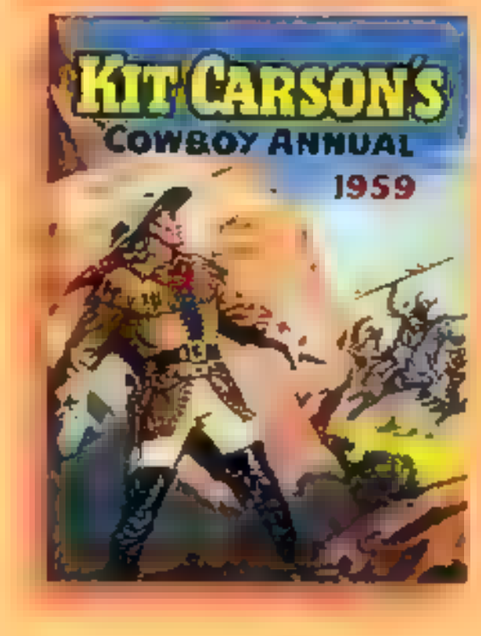


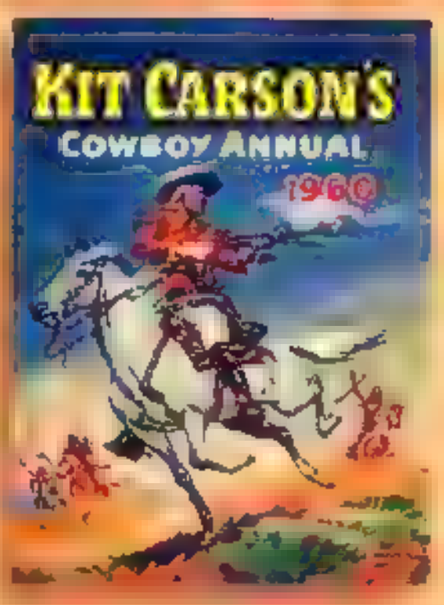




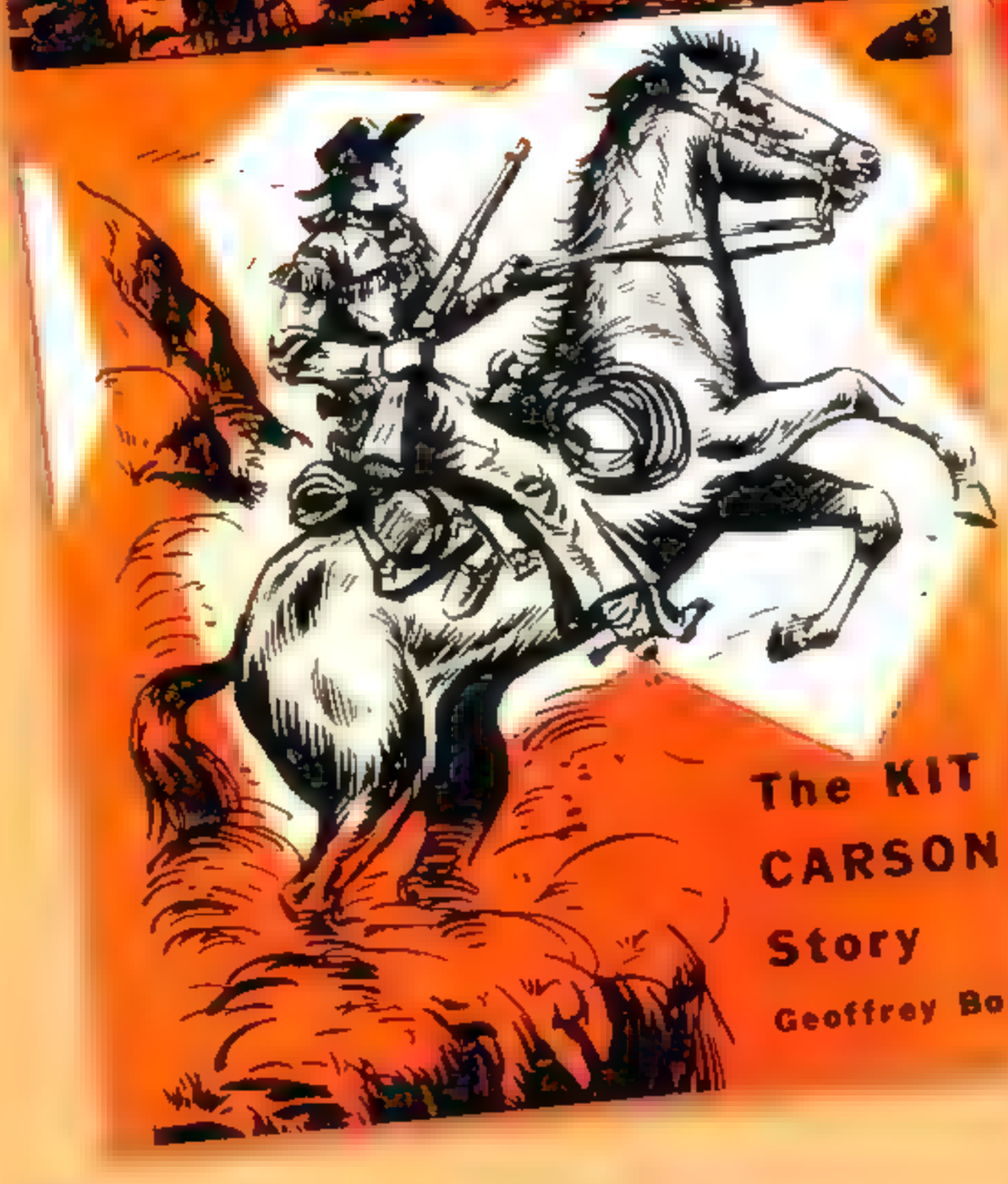








The Kit Carson Annuals in order of publication, 1954 - 1960



Geoffrey Bond's book about Kit Carson

A selection of Cowboy Comics Kit Carson - including the first (No 2)

The David Pugh 'Dan Dare'

Part Three

Steve Winders examines David Pugh's work on 'Dan Dare' from the "new" *Eagle* of 1989-1994

The fifth 'Dan Dare' adventure drawn by David Pugh began on 26th January 1991, after a six-part story drawn by the veteran artist John Burns, who had previously illustrated 'The Fists of Danny Pike', a boxing story, for the "new" *Eagle*. This new story featured Dan's attempts to catch an almost indestructible assassin robot which runs loose in Britain, hunting a rock star whom it has wrongly identified as its target. The human shaped robot is well conceived by Pugh as a mass of wires around a steel skeleton. As it goes on the rampage it constructs an impressive armoured body for itself.

Dan, Digby and their alien colleague Sedrac chase it around southern England, finally destroying it at a rock concert when Dan overrides its faulty programming and instructs it to attack him instead! After a fierce duel he manages to destroy it with his ram gun.

IT'S CERTAINLY A NEW EXPERIENCE, DIGBY... BUT WHY DO THEY KEEP CALLING US SIRIANS?
I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY CALL US... I'M A FLAMIN' HUMAN BEING...
...AND I'M NOT USED TO BEING CAGED! LEMME OUTA HERE, YA BIG DUMMY!
HIAAARRRRRL!
LISTEN TO IT!
SUCH A TEMPER MEANS THEY MUST BE HEALTHY! I WILL START AT FIFTY GROMYKS, MOGOLITH!
SEVENTY-FIVE...
EIGHTY!

The robot was clearly inspired by the "Terminator" in the 1984 film of the same name, which was also a robot assassin, so again Tully derived his idea from a familiar source. The all action story was entertaining enough but it was again too short to develop its source material in any way. It is not surprising that in the next issue of *Eagle* the editor announced that after the new six-part adventure drawn by Jon Haward, David Pugh would return with a much longer story.

But before David's next story began a major change took place to *Eagle*. From the penultimate episode of the robot assassin story the strip was reduced from four pages a week to three. Elsewhere in the comic other changes took place, with repeats of popular old strips replacing the new ones. Clearly *Eagle* was having to cut costs as the 1990 re-launch had not generated sufficient sales. Then after five episodes of the new Jon Haward story, *Eagle* became a monthly publication. Although extended to 64 pages, the comic was filled with repeated material, except for three pages each of 'Dan Dare' and 'Computer Warrior'.

David's new adventure began in the second *Eagle* Monthly, dated June 1991 and ran for fifteen episodes, ending in August 1992. In the story Dan and Digby are captured by a race of aliens who are humanoid in size and build but closely resemble dogs in appearance. Their captors have a gun which shrinks Dan and Digby to the size of a thumb and they are sold as pets to a family of dog people! The premise of giants keeping people as pets goes right back to Gulliver's adventures in Brobdingnag, written in the eighteenth century. There have also been many fairy stories and science fiction films featuring tiny people struggling to survive in a giant world, so yet again the concept is not an original one. However on this occasion the longer story enabled Tom Tully to develop ideas and tell an entertaining story.

Pugh presents us with a distinctive alien city that is home to the dog people. Its buildings are conical towers, but with rounded tops shaped like skull

caps. Grey green in colour, the city has a medieval look about it despite the circular spacecraft landing pad in among the buildings. The clothing worn by the dog people also has a medieval look. Soldiers wear steel helmets, breastplates and shoulder armour and the family who buy Dan and Digby wear hoods and loose clothing. This medieval appearance, along with the aliens' resemblance to dogs, helps to emphasise the allegorical and fairy tale roots of the story. However, this story takes a dark look at fairy tales.

BUT DIGBY'S ATTENTION HAD ALREADY FOCUSED ELSEWHERE...
WHAT...WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM?
IT'S A 'HER', ACTUALLY... A YOUNG WOMAN! SHE'S SUFFERING FROM THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF MINIATURISATION...
...IT'LL HAPPEN TO ALL OF US, EVENTUALLY!
Next Month: TIGER EELS!

Shocking images from David Pugh - The long-term effects of Miniaturisation

The dog characters who appear in the early episodes all resemble flatter faced breeds, allowing Pugh to show their emotions through their facial expressions more easily. In drawing aliens to resemble dogs there is a danger of their appearing too friendly, but Pugh prominently features their sharp canine teeth and gives them angry and aggressive expressions to ensure a menacing appearance.

In the story, Dan and Digby escape from the family and meet up with other miniaturised humans in the sewers under the Dog city. One of the people wears a helmet made from an old thimble and the fugitives live in discarded drink cans and an old training shoe! Just as the reader recalls the nursery rhymes about the old woman who lived in a shoe, we are brought back to the horror of this fairy-tale scenario when Digby discovers a young woman whose skin has turned grey and is covered in sores. Her eyes are bloodshot and she is going bald. Evidently this is cellular decay caused by the effects of long-term miniaturisation and it will eventually kill them all. There are two detailed close-ups of the unfortunate woman, showing the new emphasis on shocking images which began in Pugh's first Mekon story.

In the sewer town, Dan learns that "Mogolith", the leader of the dogs has a machine in his headquarters that can restore people to their own size and he vows to find it. However the dog people, who are aware of escaped humans in their sewers, send in "tiger eels" to flush them out. These creatures are long silver amphibians with red eyes and mouths full of long pointed teeth. Being the size of Earth's larger eels they are huge monsters to the tiny people. While the others flee, Dan and Digby opt to remain in the shanty town and escape by hiding in the boot of an injured dog guard. The other people are not so lucky. The guards return with several human bodies hanging upside down on a stick like dead rats.

Our heroes find their way to Mogolith's headquarters where they discover that he has used an innocuous film of a man exercising his pet dog, sent out from Earth on a deep space probe many years previously, to convince his people that humans are evil. Dan finds the de-miniaturising machine which is about to be used to restore a dog to full size after he has signed his money and property over to the villainous Mogolith. Dan and Digby

run from cover into the path of the beam and are restored to full size. They then overcome Mogolith himself and reduce him and his guards to tiny size.

They explain to the other dog people, called "Droges", that humans do not ill-treat their dogs and that Mogolith has given them a false picture of humans. There is much more information in the probe that will confirm this. When threatened with the sewers, the tiny Mogolith admits that he has tricked his people to gain power and wealth. The Droges agree to restore all their human pets to full size and return them to the space colonies they were abducted from.

Although it was rooted in fairy stories and allegory this story did not seem to have any message except possibly to encourage readers to look after their pets properly and to show that some fairy tales are really most disturbing. It does not even reflect on the morality of keeping pets. Pugh's artwork maintains a high standard throughout. The only negative aspect of the story is one that was beyond the control of artist and writer. At only three pages per month the story took too long to tell. Reading this story now, I find that it is exciting and maintains the tension well, but original readers had to wait a year and a quarter to complete this 45 page story with just fifteen frames per episode. I recall that before reading each new instalment back in 1991 – 92 I had to read the previous one again to remind myself what had happened. Monthlies can succeed in telling serial stories, but they need to feature much more than fifteen frames per month to work.

One apparent advantage of *Eagle* going monthly was that David Pugh could now draw all the 'Dan Dare' stories, so his next one began in the following issue. This again featured the Mekon and from now on the strip began on the front cover of the paper and continued on page two and the back page.

The editor Barrie Tomlinson used his decision to return Dan to the front cover to garner some much needed publicity and several newspapers announced the fact. The *Daily Mail* produced a half page article supported by a colour picture of Pugh's first front page. In fact Dan's return to the cover actually highlighted the extremely low budget allocated for the *Eagle* monthly, which did not even allow for a specially commissioned front page. Apart from the three page 'Dan Dare' and 'Computer Warrior' strips, a picture of a star from show business, a readers' page and the editor's comments, all the rest of the paper was usually reprinted material. Until Dan returned to the front cover in September 1991 it had simply featured key frames from stories inside, increased in size to fill the space. Pictures increased to double their intended size, as sometimes occurred, could not have the impact of a specially drawn cover and neither could the paste-ups of frames from several of the monthly's contents that were also used. Consequently the all-important selling point of an attractive cover was not being properly utilised.

Only one solution was available to Barrie Tomlinson to solve this problem and this was to use the first of the three 'Dan Dare' pages as the front page. In order to maximise the impact of the page David Pugh tended to draw one main illustration with no more than two other smaller ones for the cover. However he produced sixteen frames per episode by drawing more frames on the two other pages.

The new "Mekon" story ran for seventeen episodes and was the longest of all Pugh's 'Dan Dare' adventures. However it was also the last as *Eagle* monthly closed in January 1994 with the last episode of the story.

This final adventure is very different in pace and style from its predecessor. Set predominantly on Earth it details the Mekon's latest plan to conquer our planet. This time the evil Treen mastermind has taken control of a popular television programme broadcast from an orbiting satellite. This show is called "Place The Face", and contestants have to correctly identify the planets that various featured aliens come from.

Winning contestants receive a prize of virtual reality crystals which can apparently transport their senses to a holiday destination of their choice when poured in their baths! In fact the crystals are really dehydrated Treens and when poured in the bath water they transform into a squad of Treen troopers!

The Mekon ensures that several key Spacefleet personnel win the competition so that his "instant Treens" can be infiltrated into Spacefleet Headquarters. Dan manages to defeat a Treen suicide squad in the nick of time to save the life of the new Spacefleet Controller Gastroban Brancha, a typical Pugh alien creation whom I can best describe as a cross between a jellyfish and a slug. Under cover of the "Place The Face Roadshow" the Mekon lands in Salisbury in England and makes his way to a military base on Salisbury Plain where more of his "crystal" Treens have been unwitting-

ly unleashed. Here they take control of an array of Earth's most devastating weapons. Fortunately Dan and Digby arrive on the scene and Dan uses the energy core from his ram gun to destroy the Treens, having previously discovered that when used in ultrasonic mode the gun caused the "instant" Treens to crack and fall apart. Of course the Mekon escapes in the obligatory escape capsule, but the plot is foiled.

Despite being mostly confined to Earth, this final adventure is packed with action from start to finish. Beginning with a space battle between Dan's *Eagle* spacecraft and a Spacefleet patrol ship that is being controlled by the Mekon and ending with a ground battle against Treens in "stealth" tanks, the story also manages to include Dan's famous *Anastasia* ship from the Frank Hampson era. Pugh provides us with an accurate and original close-up of Anastasia's control area with its distinctive observation bubbles viewed from above. He also makes effective use of the airbrush in his space backgrounds which recalls Keith Watson's work and draws several profiles of Dan's face in Watson's style.

A "cracking up" Treen!

The new alien Controller of the Spacefleet is introduced in this adventure and shows interesting potential. Although he plays only a minor part in this story he is critical of the security arrangements at Spacefleet Headquarters, suggesting that he might have been an abrasive character in future stories. In an interview for a *Dan Dare Holiday Special* in 1991 Tom Tully stated that Sir Hubert was his least favourite character and that he would like to see Dan having to deal with a new Controller who would cause him a few problems. It is surely reasonable to suppose therefore that Gastroban Brancha might have clashed with Dan in future adventures if the series had not been cancelled. However perhaps it is better that readers were spared this development, as the adventures of both the *2000 A.D.* Dare and the first "new" *Eagle* Dare ended with them in conflict with the Earth authorities and trying to clear their names. One more adventure might have placed David Pugh's version in exactly the same situation! It is worth noting that all three versions ended with Tom Tully as writer.

A negative aspect of this final story was the use of another gory shocking image. In the scene where Dan's ram gun first causes a Treen to crack into pieces, Pugh shows his eyeball falling from its socket and a part of his brain exposed in his breaking skull. In the previous 'Dog Planet' story the disturbing images of the decaying woman served to emphasise the horror of the humans' predicament; but the falling eyeball and the visible brain are unnecessary additions to the picture of the Treen breaking apart.

The "new look" Jocelyn Peabody

As always David Pugh's artwork was commendable. Over his time on the strip he had gradually produced more pages with single black line borders round his frames, instead of the traditional thicker and clearer white borders. In the hands of many artists this can be a retrograde step, because it makes it more difficult to distinguish between one frame and another and consequently it becomes difficult for the reader to follow the story. Since Pugh's time on 'Dan Dare' this convention has become more popular and in my opinion very often makes stories less accessible. However Pugh's work was so clear and detailed and his use of borders so carefully considered that his page layouts usually enhanced the telling of the story.

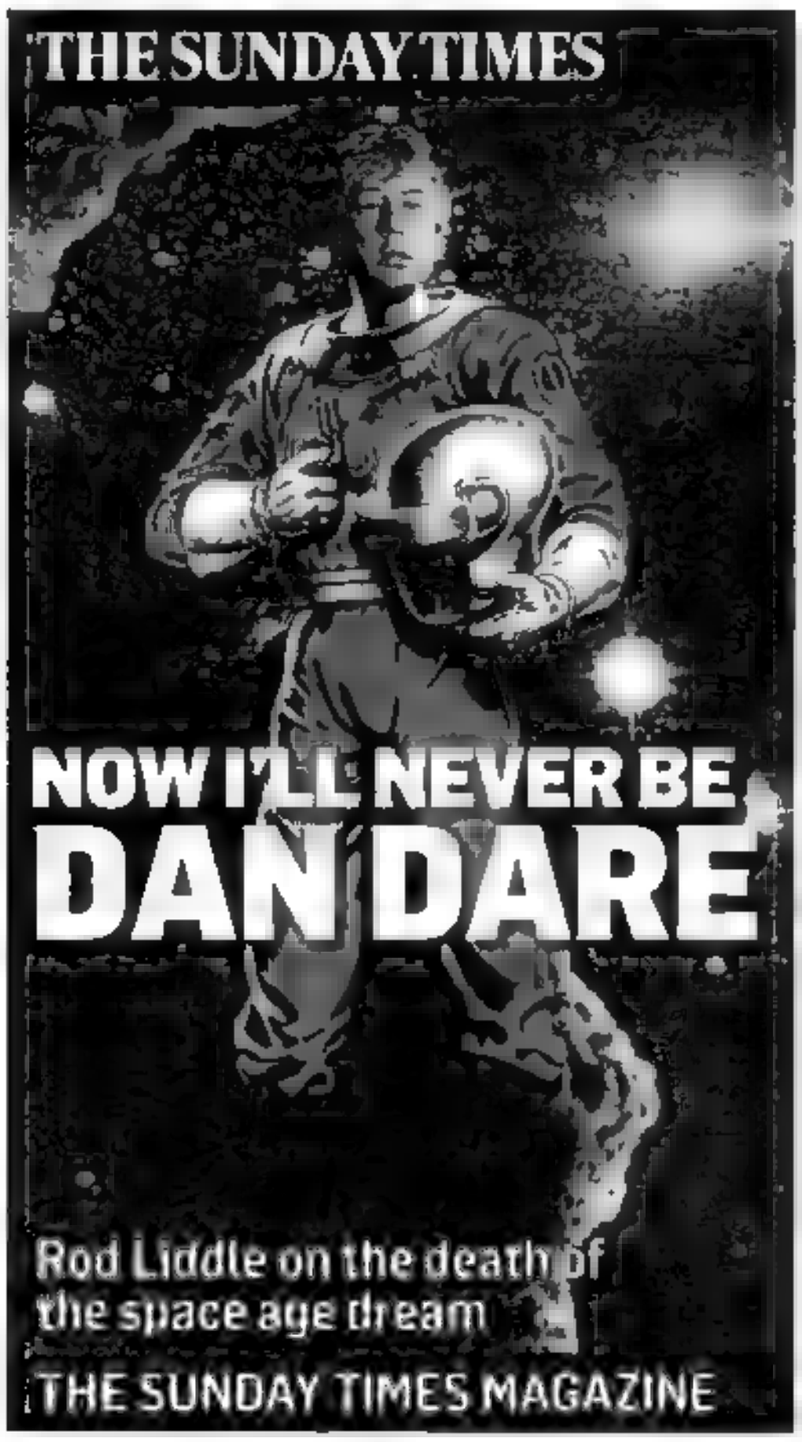
The "new" *Eagle* had been highly successful in generating media interest in its developments over the years and most national newspapers carried short articles on its closure. "It's just not economically viable anymore," said Fleetway spokesman Peter Acton. In truth the "new" *Eagle* really faded away rather than died, as the monthly provided such a small amount of new material. From a personal point of view I was not particularly sorry when it finally expired, although for much of its life I found plenty to praise about it. But the 'Dan Dare' stories by Tom Tully had never achieved the standard of his excellent story for *2000 A.D.*'s version back in 1979. The welcome return of the original Dan was steadily muted by changes made to both Dan and the strip which were strongly promoted by Tully and would have surely continued to pull the story away from its roots had it not been cancelled. Additionally the increasing use of horrific and gory images went against the philosophy of the original *EAGLE* which was established to combat horror comics imported from America.

Apart from his work on the 'Dan Dare' strip in *Eagle* itself, David Pugh also drew Dare stories for *Eagle Annual* and a *Dan Dare Holiday Special*. He produced cover art for the 1991 *Special* and a *Dan Dare Annual* for 1991; and he illustrated a large free 'Dan Dare' poster for *Eagle* Monthly. In all these publications his work maintained the high standards he had set in the magazine.

Although the "new" *Eagle* became so full of reprints that its closure was not really mourned, David Pugh's high-quality artwork was certainly missed and it was no surprise when he was commissioned by fan writer Rod Barzilay in the mid nineties to illustrate a first page for a new story he had written called 'Green Nemesis'. This story, which was very much in the style and layout of the Dare strip in the original *EAGLE* was eventually taken on by Don Harley. Nevertheless it is an indication of the high regard in which David's talent is held by many fans of the Hampson 'Dan Dare' that he was asked.

Subsequently David worked on the popular 'Scorer' strip in the *Daily Mirror*, producing computer generated backgrounds for the story. He has always been enthusiastic about trying out new techniques, which is the sign of a committed artist. He was surely a worthy successor to Frank Hampson. ❑

Spotted In The Press



The advertisement shown above above appeared in full colour in *The Times* on 30th June, 2011, and was repeated on 1st July.

The 'Spectrum' section of the next issue of the *Sunday Times Magazine* (3rd July) was devoted to the demise of the NASA Space Shuttle programme, which marks the end for some considerable time of the USA's own capability to put men (or women) into orbit. The last Shuttle to fly, *Atlantis*, was to take off on 8th July, complete its mission (STS-135) on 21st July, and would then be retired.

The cover of the *Sunday Times Magazine* depicted *Atlantis*, hanging like a dead gamebird, in a pastiche of the artwork at Britain's Tate Gallery in which a Harrier jump jet is similarly displayed. (In fact an image of *Atlantis* was superimposed on a picture of the Harrier exhibit.) An appropriate image, perhaps, because the *Atlantis*, while it may not be destined for an art gallery, is destined to become a museum piece. It will be exhibited in Florida at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex.

In the same issue of the magazine a feature article by Rod Liddle, headed 'I Want to Go Back to The Future', lamented the status of spaceflight compared with the promise at the time of *Apollo* and the then popular view of spaceflight which was "reinforced by the sci-fi fantasies .... in the comic books and cinemas of the 1950s and 1970s". (Not sure what happened to the 1960s but) "The reality as it turned out was more *Dark Star* than Dan Dare." He offered not a little criticism of

THIS BIRD HAS FLOWN
I WANT TO GO BACK TO THE FUTURE
As the first shuttle hurtled into space, Rod Liddle looked on in rapt amazement. We were going to colonise the moon, travel to Mars — and take holidays on Saturn. Thirty years on, we've fallen back to Earth. Have our Dan Dare fantasies been dashed for ever?

the Shuttle concept, which capability was limited to operations in low earth orbit, only a few hundred miles up. "Hell, Apollo made it 250,000 miles to the moon and back. The shuttle rarely exceeded the distance between New York and Washington, DC."

Imagery accompanying the article depicted Liddle as the Pilot of The Future, and made use of images from 'Dan Dare' strips (courtesy of the Dan Dare Corporation). These included an eight-frame sequence of artwork from 'Operation Saturn'. ❑

Andrew Coffey Remembers

'REIGN OF THE ROBOTS'

Back to Earth

Dan and Co. are back on Earth and that opening image shows Digby and Stripey in the raindrops. Everything is so desolate. No one about. Only the echo of Digby's voice is heard. Ever feel you are being watched? Well, yes. Dan and his friends naturally explore. In the admin block the Grand Slam full scale interplanetary alert has been operated, and there are rats in the canteen. The friends pile into a waiting car and head for Whitehall. Yes, they are being watched, the head of a scary robot appears in the last frame, Vol. 8, No. 9. What a marvellous three quarter page as the friends arrive at Whitehall. As so often with Frank Hampson the detail he puts into a frame is impressive. In the foreground an abandoned taxi with an Elektrobot crouched behind it.

The statue of General Smuts there all right, but no sign of a Churchill statue. Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament are covered by domes. The overhead monorail is a nice touch as is the gaggle of geese in the foreground. Also under a great dome the Space Ministry, funny I'd never noticed this before. Surprises await the returned Earthmen. Stripey notices a robot and is soon clearly terrified. Someone has written 2002 across the bust of Sir Hubert Guest. Bad news of the takeover of Earth in Dan and Co's absence is seen on a teleprinter. The four friends reach the door of the space ministry's inner sanctum. A familiar voice bids them enter. Vol. 8, No.10. And it's Dan's old enemy the Mekon. Elektrobots enter the Chamber but Dan soon realises the mechanisms are too strong for them. A splendid burst of action as the friends are taken to a point of departure by a team of Elektrobots, Flamer breaks loose, two robots take off into the air to recapture Flamer, nice detailing again in the underground station. Stripey is pursued by the robots but unfortunately water provides no defence against them and he is recaptured. Next it's a ride across London on Flying Treen chairs. The landmarks shown are the Hulton Press building, London Bridge, St Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of London and Tower Bridge, and what a terrific image as the Treen gunner dives out of the sky to blast a faulty robot.

The dramatic effect is heightened by the use of Boudicea on her chariot in the background . At the point of departure Dan and Co are loaded onto the Mekon's craft which takes off spectacularly from the Thames near Tower Bridge. Now the Mekon takes the friends on a worldwide tour of his slave camps. The ship flies over a new Nineveh that slaves are rebuilding. Note the human headed bull figures on the gateway that the slaves are dragging. In New Guinea the Mekon has had made a replica of Earth thousands of years ago, complete with slaves and creatures like the Sabre Toothed Tiger. The ship then dives into the sea to allow the Earthmen to view an underwater concentration camp. After this the Earthmen are taken to Greenland where Dan notices George Bryan from the 'Red Moon Mystery' on the Mars ferries. When the Spacefleet realise that Dan Dare is with them, his name is shouted round like a battle cry. George Bryan draws Dan aside and takes him down a gully where he meets a robot captured to guard a complex that was the HQ of Spacefleet Underground. Meanwhile the evil Mekon has threatened to have Dan's friends shot if Dan fails to show up. Dan has no choice but to re-appear. There's a return trip to Venus which follows next. Soon they are aboard a deep space cruiser. Vol. 8, No. 17, has a near full page image of the Mekon's satellite station.

Exit Stripey for the moment for Dan and Co., as Dan takes Digby's canister and throws it to Lex. The Earth friends watch as Digby is subjected to a lie detector test, what are his innermost thoughts? Fish and chips apparently with turkey and trimmings, not forgetting Christmas pudding. So Sondar aka Sardi is ordered to keep Digby well fed. The truth of the situation is revealed when all have left the chamber except Sir Hubert, Prof Peabody, Flamer, Dan, Digby and Sondar. Both Digby and Sondar are revealed as bluffers and Flamer gets an idea. Lex, Hank and Pierre are meanwhile taken to a shanty town where rebellious SF men are being held. Stripey is delivered to SF Underground. The Mekon orders the canister to be taken. Lex throws it at a Treen on his flying chair. In this story there are definite World War 2 overtones, what with concentration camps, sirens, resistance groups and war machines.

Digby has to act tough as the overseer of the others. His first efforts don't exactly impress Dan and Co. Flamer volunteers to get word to Spacefleet Underground. Flamer retrieves food that Digby throws away. Digby won't touch a bite of food until he can share it with the rest, and a plan of action is developing in the mind of Flamer. He can do a perfect imitation of the Mekon's voice. Then something totally unexpected happens. The Treen guarding the Earthmen raises his goggles and Dan recognises Sondar, his old friend. Once on Venus, Dan and Co. are taken to the house of silence where Sir Hubert, Hank, Pierre, and Peabody lie in suspended animation on cabinets. The Mekon orders Dan to operate a lever which brings about, in Dan's words "the strangest reunion ever". Vol. 8, No. 18, 1st frame has Dan reunited with the rest of the team and all the friends are placed in a chamber to decide whether or not they will aid the Mekon's plans. The Mekon places Sir Hubert in a torture chamber to try and force him to acknowledge the Mekon as the mightiest of all but Dan seizes the initiative and a Treen rifle and blasts away at an Elektrobot. Vol. 8 No. 21, and what an action packed three quarter page, as the Earthmen take on the Treens in a glorious battle. Dan grabs the Mekon unseated by Lex, who receives an electric shock. Enter the selektrobots, the most powerful of the Mekon's robots, which recapture the Earth party. Aboard the spacecraft *M.E.K.I*, en route to earth, Digby feigns desertion and the Mekon calls for him. Vol. 8, No. 23. has

I'VE GOT TO FOOL THE MEKON, COLONEL DAN... SO I HOPE YOU WON'T HAVE ME COURT-MARTIALLED FOR INSOLENCE WHEN IT'S ALL OVER!
SCOWL, YOU SAP! YOU'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT TO KEEP OLD MELON-HEAD FOOLED!

Digby "in charge"

that centre three-quarter-page image of the deep space cruiser leaving for Earth. Digby faces a lie detector test in Vol. 8, No. 24, as the Earth party are brought to camp DT4, a tropical prison camp which Dan had already seen earlier.

The prisoners notice Sir Hubert is in Dan's group and George Bryan thinks S.F.U. must know of this immediately. Using an improvised bomb he distracts the guards. Steve Valiant makes for the S.F.U. chamber. These scenes are reminiscent of World War 2 concentration camps. As far as Frank Hampson was concerned this may have been intentional. Digby puts in an appearance. Most of the gang think he has turned traitor. Dan knows better though. Dan and his companions are split into two groups and Stripey has a rough ride in the food canister. Lex is allowed to keep the canister luckily. Digby undergoes the lie detector test. What are his main thoughts? Fish and chips apparently and he keeps up the bluff to control the rest of the gang. But when they are unguarded, except for

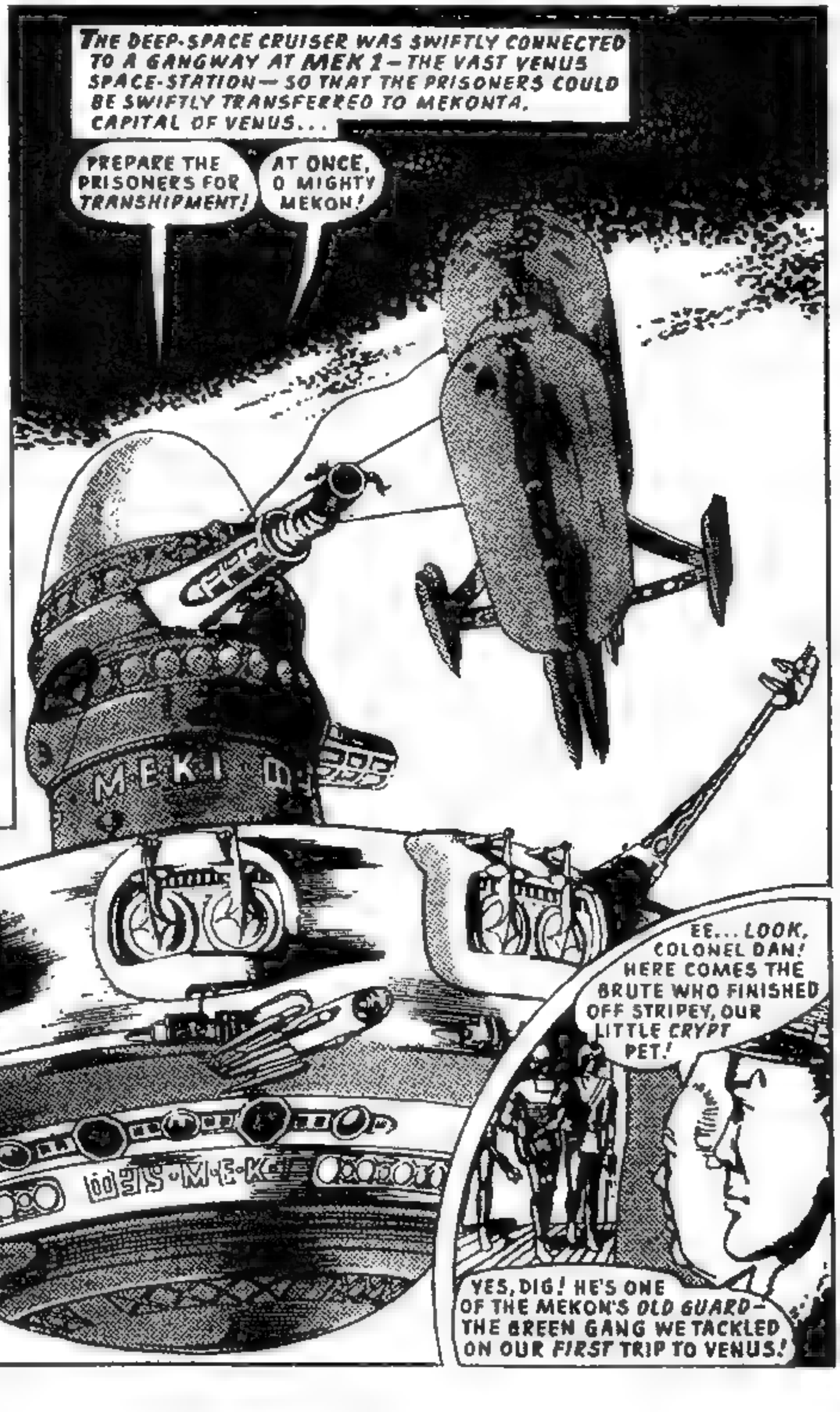
Sondar, Digby's true loyalty is revealed in Sondar's identity.

Meanwhile Hank, Pierre and Lex arrive at their camp and meet the other inmates to whom Stripey is introduced, but what to do with the little Crypt creature? Lex and Steve devise a plan. They reach a nearby building, Steve takes Stripey to a S.F.U. secret entrance and Lex creates a diversion. The slaves are marched to work and Digby is forced to keep up his bluff. Flamer has a flash of inspiration. Digby throws out the food brought to him, but Flamer manages to collect it whilst vowing to implement his plan. He can mimic the Mekon's voice perfectly. The S.F.U. people were once pupils with Flamer, and Flamer outlines his plan. Flamer's race back to camp is covered by a show of cameo rockets. Digby blows his cover in order for Dan to get Stripey aboard the space transport. The others now realise Digby's true loyalty. The ship takes off. Luckily Flamer has with him a mini-walkie-talkie system and slips a flare gun into Dan's pocket. Once aboard the space station Dan has a bold plan, which he puts into action.

He races for a space rocket as he fires the flares to blind the robots. With Stripey's help Dan takes off in the craft and comes across the Sargasso Sea of Space (Vol. 8, No. 36). Here lost ships have gathered, including the *Kingfisher* from the first Venus story, a Saturnian ship, and even a battered "black cat" from 'Operation Saturn'. Dan notices a Z19 ship, still in preparation when Dan left for Cryptos. Dan is surprised to find two Spacefleet men still alive aboard the ship, holed up aboard the Z19 since the Mekons invasion. King and McFarlane, the two SF men, take Dan outside the ship and Dan gets the surprise of his life. Vol. 8, No. 38. Dan sees, for the first time since he lost her during the 'Red Moon' escapade, his old ship the *Anastasia.* The Mekon has a plan to place Dan's friend in a controlled area of the flame belt so that Dan will attempt a rescue. Dan has a plan too.

Sir Hubert, Peabody, Hank, Pierre and Lex are placed in a capsule to be dropped in the flamebelt. Dan makes contact with the Mekon and, as Digby appears on screen, Stripey appears. Sondar takes action, releases the Earth party and forces the Treen guard into the capsule instead; and then the capsule is dropped. Crusoe and Friday fly the carrier ship to Mekonta while Dan flies off in *Anastasia*. As the *Anastasia* touches down in the flame-belt region to meet up with the gang again.

Vol. 8, No. 44. The quality of the artwork has fallen here, FH was probably away on holiday


THE DEEP-SPACE CRUISER WAS SWIFTLY CONNECTED TO A GANGWAY AT MEK 1 — THE VAST VENUS SPACE-STATION — SO THAT THE PRISONERS COULD BE SWIFTLY TRANSFERRED TO MEKONTA, CAPITAL OF VENUS...
PREPARE THE PRISONERS FOR TRANSHIPMENT!
AT ONCE, O MIGHTY MEKON!
MEK 1
EE... LOOK, COLONEL DAN! HERE COMES THE BRUTE WHO FINISHED OFF STRIPEY, OUR LITTLE CRYPT PET!
YES, DIG! HE'S ONE OF THE MEKON'S OLD GUARD — THE GREEN GANG WE TACKLED ON OUR FIRST TRIP TO VENUS!

MEK 1 space station

SHE COULDN'T HAVE HAD A BETTER OVERHAUL IN SPACEFLEET'S OWN WORKSHOPS!
YE'RE RIGHT, BOB! I RECKON SHE'S GOT A THOUSAND CIRCUITS, AN' I'VE CHECKED 'EM ALL!
THE FINAL TEST LIES AHEAD— HOW WILL SHE BEHAVE UNDER POWER?!

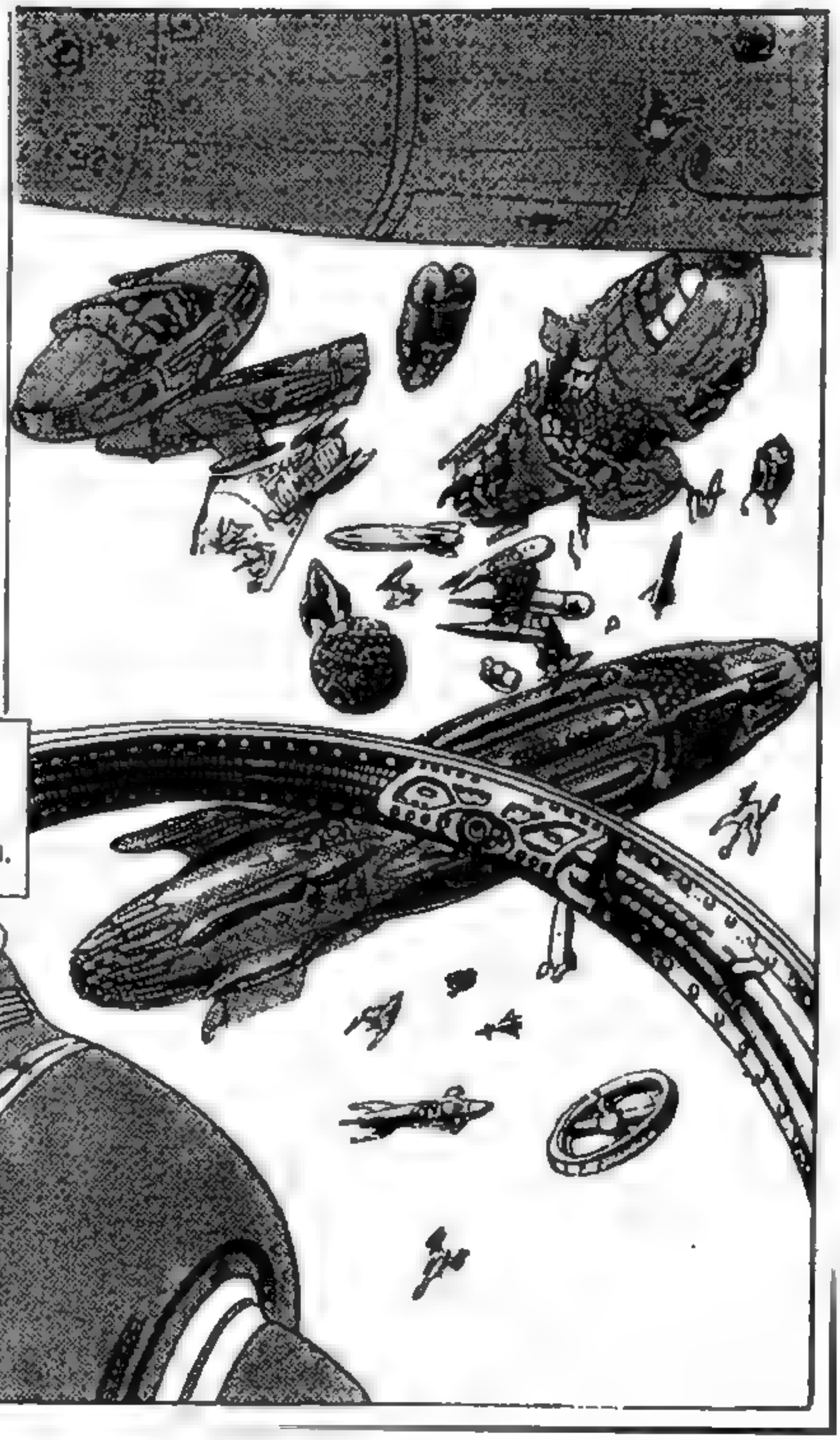
Dan plots with "Crusoe" King and "Friday Macfarlane

that week. Digby, Crusoe and Friday are under interrogation. Lex and Flamer are recaptured by the Treens. Dan and Sir Hubert together with Peabody, Hank and Pierre are led through the splendidly drawn Venusian Jungle. (FH had returned from his holiday that week.) Blue faces are seen in the foreground - these are Atlantines. There follows an exciting sequence in which the friends fall into an Atlantine trap meant for Selektrobots. Selektrobots fall into the trap, but the friends manage to escape by forging a human chain to lift Peabody from the mud. In Treenland Lex, Digby, Flamer, Crusoe and Friday implement Flamer's plan.

Once again the mighty Mekon is unseated and Flamer grabs the Mekon's mike, ordering the Electrobots to destroy one another. But, what about the Selektrobots which operate on a separate circuit? Vol. 8, No. 50, as Dan is shown the missile controllable by a pilot which can destroy the satellite controlling the Selektrobots. As the Mekon prepares more Selektrobots, Dan takes off in the missile rocket. As the second stage of Dan's rocket falls away, Sir Hubert takes off in *Anastasia* to attempt a rescue. Vol. 9, No. 3, page 2 has a terrific half-page as the missile strikes home and blasts the satellite to smithereens. Dan has baled out, of course, and awaits rescue by Sir Hubert. Vol 9, No. 4 a three quarter page image of the prison camp as it tackles the golden killers. The signal cuts out and the UN are soon back in control. Sir Hubert carries a shattered Dan through *Anastasia*'s air lock.

***The Ship That Lived* followed on this story.** ❑

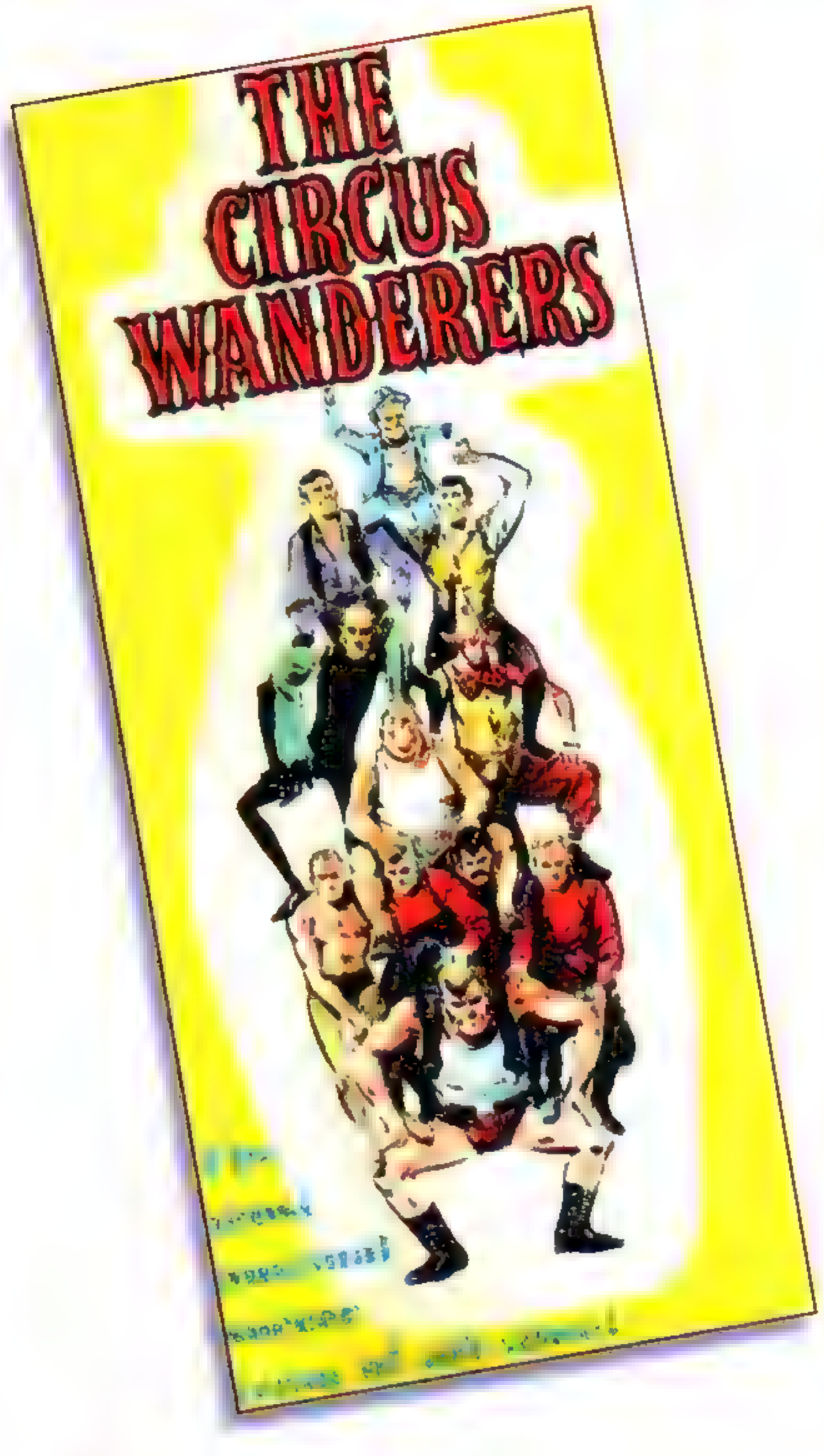
Dan comes across the Sargasso Sea of Space


EARTH WAS IN THE GRIP OF THE MEKON, WHO WAS TRYING TO FORCE DAN TO HELP HIM CONQUER THE UNIVERSE. DAN AND CO. KNEW THAT THEIR ONLY CHANCE WAS TO LOCATE AND DESTROY THE POWER STATION OF THE ELECTROBOTS, MECHANICAL MONSTERS CONTROLLED BY THE MEKON'S VOICE VIBRATIONS. DAN ESCAPED IN THE MEKON'S SHIP AND EVADED PURSUIT BY A TREEN SQUADRON, AND, AS HE BORED DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO UNCHARTED SPACE, HE SAW...
JUMPING JETS! I MUST HAVE STRUCK THE GRAVEYARD OF EVERY SHIP THAT EVER WENT OFF BEAM SINCE SPACEFLIGHT BEGAN...!

EAGLE'S WANDERERS

Steve Winders examines *EAGLE*'s two fictional football strips

Part Two: The Circus Wanderers



EAGLE's second soccer strip began in August 1968, just eight months before the paper was absorbed into *Lion*. This was 'The Circus Wanderers', about a soccer team composed of circus performers who utilised their circus skills when playing football. The acrobatic Romanoff brothers would form a human pyramid to win high balls, Waldo the strong man would kick the ball with an unstoppable force and Beppo the clown would confuse opponents with his tricks.

Obviously this was a less serious strip than 'Home of the Wanderers' and belonged to the "novelty football team" genre which included 'Legge's Eleven' in *Valiant*, 'Football Family Robinson' in *Jag* and 'Carson's Cubs' in *Lion*. 'Legge's Eleven' was a team of highly individual distinctive characters. They included a Frenchman with beret and a pencil moustache, tall Australian twins complete with slouch hats, an English Lord who wore a monocle and a Scotsman wearing a bonnet. 'Carson's Cubs' was about a team of boy footballers who played in the third division of the Football League and the team were effectively child equivalents of 'Legge's Eleven'. They even had their own monocled boy aristocrat. 'Football Family Robinson' was about larger than life members of the Robinson family, who together formed the Thatchem United team who played in the fourth division. Together with 'The Circus Wanderers', which was actually a better basic idea than the others, these semi-humorous stories addressed the problems which beset the more serious football strips of giving eleven or more characters distinctive personalities and providing credible stories. They created exaggerated stereotyped characters who looked and behaved very differently from each other and they revelled in unconvincing plots.

At first 'The Circus Wanderers' occupied the centre colour pages of *EAGLE*, forming the middle of an eight-page section entirely devoted to soccer. The other pages included one on 'Top Teams', a 'Match of the Week' feature, a coaching item called 'Tips from the Top' and a weekly 'Pin Up' of a well known player. This eight-page section ran for four weeks before *EAGLE* reduced it to six and then after four months to just four pages including the 'Wanderers' strip. From March 1st, 1969, the two feature pages were dropped and a single page 'Top Teams' or a half page of 'Tips from the Top' would appear intermittently until *EAGLE* closed in late April. 'The Circus Wanderers' ran until the merger. This sudden focus on soccer was a last attempt to boost sales of *EAGLE* by aiming at what was essentially a new market. The eight-page soccer sections were featured in 32-page issues, increasing from the usual 24, so

Fire and dastardly deeds at the Circus ***Art: Loredano Ugolini Lettering : David Gould***

that *EAGLE* was able to accommodate them without sacrificing the regular features or strips, which would have involved a significant risk of losing established readers. When the decision makers at I.P.C. who published *EAGLE* gauged the success of this venture they were able to conclude that sales had not improved and the soccer elements were phased out as they obliged the editors Bob Bartholomew and Alfred Wallace to move the paper towards a merger with *Lion*.

When it first started on the centre pages 'The Circus Wanderers' was set out in a confusing format. The title logo was set in between the two pages across the centre fold and consisted of the title above a long picture of all the Wanderers in a human pyramid which extended for the length of the page. This design meant that it was not clear to readers whether each line of strip straddled the centre pages or continued on the line below. Fortunately the editors anticipated this problem before publication and took the unusual step of numbering each frame in the bottom left hand corner. The strip ran across the centre for the first three episodes before switching to a down-the-page format, which better suited the layout. 'The Circus Wanderers' ran on the colour centre pages for two months before taking a turn on the front and back pages in the issue dated October 19th 1968 (Volume 19 No. 42). At this time all *EAGLE*'s regular strips took turns on the front cover. The strip then returned to the centre pages until the issue dated December 14th, 1968, when it returned to the cover for two issues before moving to two black and white inside pages. Finally it moved back to the centre colour pages on April 5th,1969, remaining there for the last four issues of *EAGLE*. When the strip moved into black and white the unusual logo was abandoned, with a simple title located in the opening frame of the first line of strip replacing it. The strip now occupied two clear distinct pages with borders between them and when it returned to the colour centre pages this new layout was retained.

'The Circus Wanderers' contrasted with the established strips in *EAGLE* in that it did not contain any science fiction or fantasy elements. Even the western strip 'Blackbow the Cheyenne' often included fantasy. However it was closer in spirit to strips in *Lion*, especially 'Carson's Cubs' and it was soon joined by repeated strips from *EAGLE*'s past and from old Fleetway comics replacing some of *EAGLE*'s features and bringing the comic even closer to *Lion*'s style.

The 'Circus Wanderers' saga was presented as two stories. The first was quite serious in mood despite the frivolous premise of the strip. It involves two plots which immediately follow each other. The story begins with Shelford Wanderers having just lost their league status. All the players leave except player manager Tim Masters who now fears the extinction of the club. He then inherits a circus from his uncle Bertram Masters and arrives there to find the performers enjoying a game of football. Watching them play he notices the way they use their circus skills in the game and realises that they could become the new Shelford team. He convinces the performers that they have the makings of a successful team, but in their first game they start very badly because they try to play in a traditional way and do not use their unusual skills. At half time they trail 5-0 and Tim tells them to enjoy themselves as they have done in friendly

games around the circus and in the second half they stage a dramatic comeback, with the game ending 5-4.

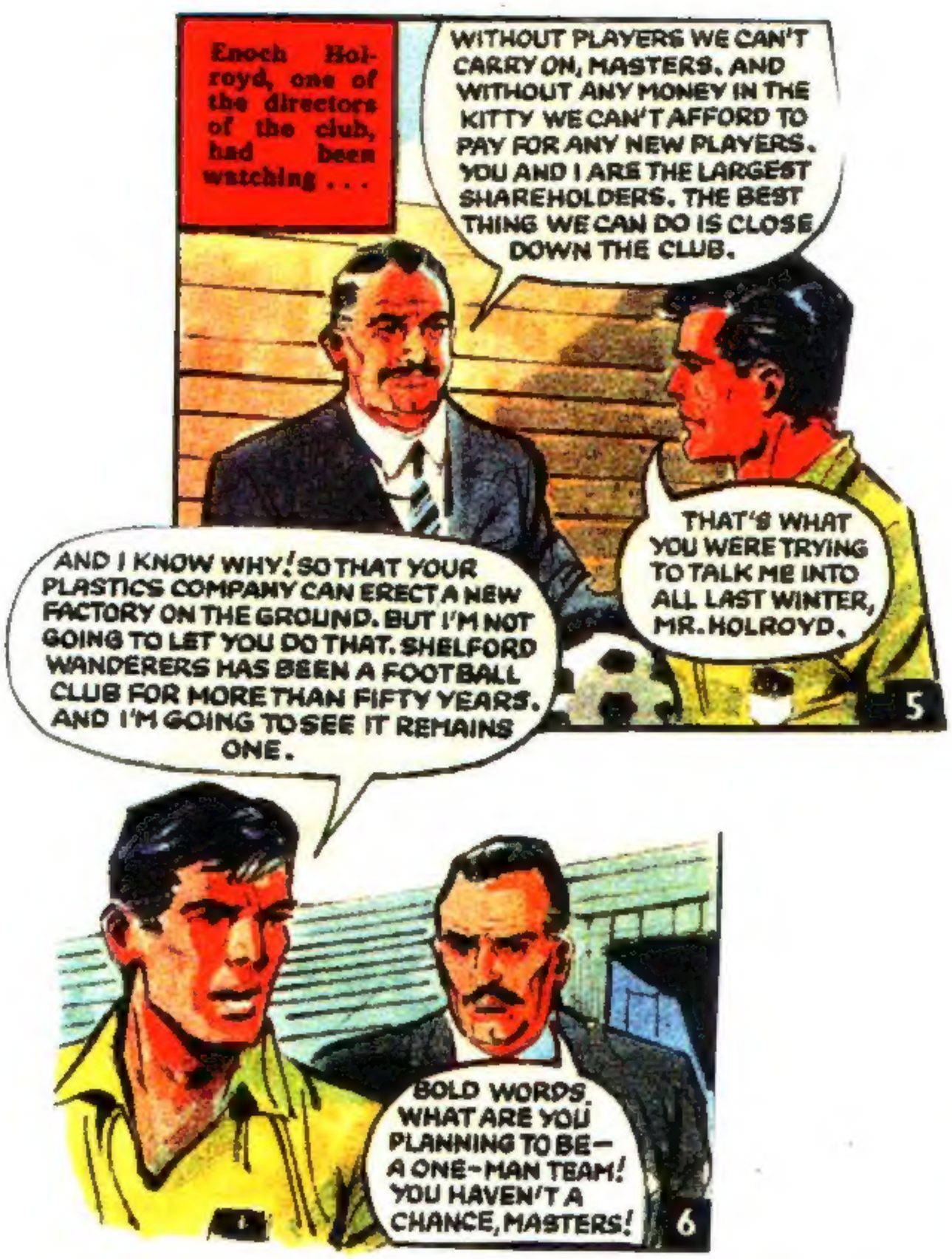
As the team develops they have to battle threats from a villainous director, Enoch Holroyd, who wants to close the club so that he can build a Plastics factory on the site. This culminates in his setting fire to the circus to distract the players while a confederate steals the takings. Holroyd throws the stolen money on the fire when confronted by the Wanderers, but a tiger escapes and his plot backfires when it corners him. The players force him to confess to his crimes before they send the animal trainer to rescue him. Tim Masters then forces him to relinquish his place on the club board and to pay back the stolen money. No sooner has the evil director been dispatched than the Wanderers face another threat, which begins in the same episode. This time a local millionaire, who wants to replace the circus players with his own team, tries to discredit them in Shelford. He manages to get the team and the circus banned from the town. However the issue dated December 21st, 1968, has a happy ending, with the Wanderers exposing and defeating the rascally millionaire and his rival team. While the plots in this first story defied credibility they were not ludicrous like those which followed in the second story and involved quite perilous situations. Also in the first story the characters were not so ridiculous as those in the other novelty football team strips, as their circus apparel distinguished them from each other without the need for such excesses as monocles, bonnets and berets and with just Beppo the clown providing the humour.

However from the next episode the strip descended into using old plots from 'Legge's Eleven' and 'Carson's Cubs', such as one where a well-meaning scientist tries to help the team with a series of disastrous inventions and another where a player loses a lucky charm and plays badly as a result. As each storyline was resolved the next one began in that episode and so there were no more story endings until the Wanderers won the County Cup in the final issue of *EAGLE*.

David Gould lettered many episodes of 'The Circus Wanderers' and recalls that no writer's name appeared on the scripts for the early episodes of the strip, which was usually an indication that it was written by one of the editors. David suspects that this was probably Alf Wallace. The strip was drawn by the Italian artist Loredano Ugolini until the issue dated February 1st, 1969, when it was taken over by Barrie Mitchell, who would later be acclaimed for his work on other sports strips, particularly 'Roy of the Rovers'. The artwork by Ugolini and Mitchell was quite similar as Mitchell clearly attempted to copy his predecessor's style on the strip, although Ugolini used a bolder line and Mitchell was more adept at conveying facial expression. Both artists conveyed movement convincingly. Ugolini had been a talented footballer himself in his youth. Towards the end of *EAGLE*'s run Mitchell was working on both 'The Circus Wanderers' and a new strip about motor racing called 'Lightning Stormm' which was drawn with a sharper line and is much more easily recognisable as his work. In the last few issues of *EAGLE* his work on 'The Circus Wanderers' appears hurried and it is clear that his main emphasis was on 'Lightning Stormm', which would continue in *Lion*.

GOAL!
Shelford Wanderers 0
Thurston Hamlet 1
5
Shortly after the re-start Tim skilfully steered the ball to one of the three Romanoff brothers . . .
NEVER MIND ABOUT THE BAD START WE MADE. PERHAPS WE'LL NOW SEE SOME OF THAT AMAZING CO-OPERATION THAT THE THREE ROMANOFFS SPECIALIZE IN!

Wanderers under pressure *Art: Loredano Ugolini Lettering: David Gould*


Enoch Holroyd, one of the directors of the club, had been watching . . .
WITHOUT PLAYERS WE CAN'T CARRY ON, MASTERS. AND WITHOUT ANY MONEY IN THE KITTY WE CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY FOR ANY NEW PLAYERS. YOU AND I ARE THE LARGEST SHAREHOLDERS. THE BEST THING WE CAN DO IS CLOSE DOWN THE CLUB.
THAT'S WHAT YOU WERE TRYING TO TALK ME INTO ALL LAST WINTER, MR. HOLROYD.
5
AND I KNOW WHY! SO THAT YOUR PLASTICS COMPANY CAN ERECT A NEW FACTORY ON THE GROUND. BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU DO THAT. SHELFORD WANDERERS HAS BEEN A FOOTBALL CLUB FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS. AND I'M GOING TO SEE IT REMAINS ONE.
BOLD WORDS. WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO BE— A ONE-MAN TEAM! YOU HAVEN'T A CHANCE, MASTERS!
6

From October 12th, 1968 (Volume 19 No. 41)

the 'Carson's Cubs' strip in a story arc running from February until July, 1970.

I am slightly surprised that 'The Circus Wanderers' was never repeated in other comics as I.P.C. produced several soccer based comics in the years following *EAGLE*'s demise. It is possible that the decline in popularity of circuses due to concerns about the morality of training animals to perform is the reason, but the changing layout of the strip could also explain why it would be difficult to reprint.

Both 'The Circus Wanderers' and its unconnected predecessor 'Home of the Wanderers' appeared in *EAGLE* at times of unwelcome changes and neither are fondly remembered. Both are examples of the types of strip found in many Fleetway comics and are in no way typical of *EAGLE*'s content. While each made the concession of being slightly more serious than their *Lion*, *Valiant* and *Tiger* counterparts this was not enough to make them *EAGLE* strips and they really serve as evidence of the influence of the larger controlling publishing house the Mirror Group (later I.P.C.) over *EAGLE*'s direction. ❑

Author's Note: I am grateful to David Gould, Steve Holland, Steve Laming and Adrian Perkins for providing and confirming details for these articles.

until the end, the writer was Justin Long, who although he sounded like a pseudonym (*EAGLE* was then published from Long Acre) was actually the brother of Derek Long, who wrote several episodes of 'The Iron Man'. Justin Long wrote several war stories for the monthly 'Picture Libraries' during the sixties, but became better known as the *Financial Times*' Parliamentary Correspondent!

Although it did not really echo the mood and style of the late sixties *EAGLE* 'The Circus Wanderers' was a good one as novelty football strips go. It had great potential for plots, which could involve both soccer and the circus. Unfortunately it came at a time when *EAGLE* was in its last days and once the decision was made to merge with *Lion* it simply reused tired old plots from other strips. When the merger took place 'The Circus Wanderers' was displaced by 'Carson's Cubs' which was a highly popular and well established strip in *Lion*. However the idea of a soccer team of circus performers was good enough for the Wanderers to feature in

POSTBAG

Please send letters for publication to: Keith Howard, 25A Station Road, Harrow HA1 2UA

Letters may be edited for space, or other reasons

Dear *Eagle Times*,

Reading Howard's article on 'Buffalo Bill' in the latest issue, reminds me of an adventure told to me by a neighbour when Buffalo Bill's show was performed on Northampton's old racecourse.

He was exploring the show's camp, looked into a wigwam and was chased out by the Native Americans. (The PC Brigade say that you cannot call them Red Indians anymore!).

Buffalo Bill was supposed to have stayed in a small terraced house, by the side of the course. I would have thought that he would have had an hotel? Perhaps he was "looking after his pennies"? To honour this, a small bust of his features was set in the wall of the house. I photographed this some time ago but, it's now getting weatherworn.

I have been a Wild West fan since schooldays and an avid reader of the *Buffalo Bill Annuals*. But to my surprise there is this connection to their hero in my own home town!

Regards,

PAUL WILKINS (Northampton)

ET: *Well, so it should be, Paul. After all, Southport has got Dan Dare's bust!*

Dear *Eagle Times*,

In the 1950s the A & M Bartram company in Birmingham marketed several Meccano-like construction kits under the labels 'Dan Dare Spaceship Builder' and 'Dan Dare Rocket Builder'.

I would like to contact anyone who has any of these kits or any detailed source of information about them.

Best wishes,

Dr BRETT GOODEN

bagooden@bigpond.net.au

7 Hay Road, Linden Park. South Australia 5065

Dear *Eagle Times*,

I read the Buffalo Bill article in the summer issue with interest. Did you know that inside the cover of Annual No. 11 shows Denis McLoughlin having a gunfight with himself and the front cover of the last Annual had Denis holding off Indians?

Septimus Scott never did illustrate a picture strip in Comet, only a cover. D.C. Eyles only did nine – eight in 1954 and one in 1956. He also drew two in *Kit Carson Annuals* - one in 1959 and one in 1960.

The first 'Buffalo Bill' strips were by Fred Meegar, reprinted from America with drop-in pictures by Philip Mendoza, 1953-1954. Then we had Geoff Campion, Steve Chapman, D.C. Eyles, Robert Forest, Edward Drury, Pat Nicolle (one only), Colin Merritt, Eric Bradbury, The Blasco Brothers, Julio Vivas and several artists not known.

Best Wishes,

PETER TINKLER (Stockton)

Dear *Eagle Times*,

During the 1980s, the surest way of achieving an outbreak of hissing and booing at a gathering of *Eagle Society* members was to breathe the words "New Eagle"! Alan Vince stated that 'Dan Dare' was Frank Hampson, Don Harley and Keith Watson. Broadly speaking, I agree. However, I have to agree with Steve Winders that the "New" *Eagle* did produce some excellent 'Dan Dare' art (from David Pugh and Ian Kennedy and, of course, not forgetting Keith Watson).

When David Pugh took over I thought he got off to a shaky start, but it wasn't long before he produced work that had a maturity to it. FH himself would have been proud. Just as the new artists took over from the 'Rip Kirby' strip from Alex Raymond, even matching his style, so it was with 'Dan Dare' and Frank Hampson.

I also enjoyed the features on Frank Bellamy and Keith Watson.

Yours thoughtfully,

ANDREW COFFEY (Great Yarmouth)

ET: *I am sure many will agree with your observations, Andrew. Also, I apologise for not mentioning that you trail blazed a goodly amount on 'Operation Saturn' a while back in earlier issues. Incidentally, Frank Hampson was not the first to*

mention monoatomic hydrogen. It cropped up in an early black and white film, 'Rocketship XM'.

Dear *Eagle Times*,

It's great news that Charles Chilton's autobiography is now available and I would like to think we at *Eagle Times* had a small hand in it being published. Last year, Mrs Penny Chilton phoned me up to say that she and Charles couldn't find a publisher for the book, and would *Eagle Times* be interested in publishing it? I replied that we would but we didn't have the finances to have it printed and do a proper job of advertising it.

Later that day I had a phone call from Charles Norton who was writing a book on 'Dan Dare' and wanted some information. I told him that Charles Chilton couldn't find a publisher and Charles Norton said he would contact his publisher to see if they were interested. I phoned Penny back to tell her.

Mr Norton did get his publisher interested! Just shows what a word in the right place can do!

Regards,

HOWARD CORN, (Northampton)

ET: Well done, Howard if *ET* had a small hand in getting the book published!

Dear *Eagle Times*,

I was very pleased to hear that they are bringing out another 'Dick Barton' story in October. Two stories, I hear, are incomplete. But possibly it is worth considering a "narrative link-up". The BBC had a similar problem when they released *The Andromeda Anthology* several years ago. A good percentage of the episodes was missing from the first story, 'A For Andromeda' but they filled in the gaps with telesnaps which worked very well. However, it may be more prudent to see how future sales progress.

I can remember bits and bobs of many of the stories. Barton's first encounter with Inspector Burke (unfortunate choice of name!) when he was framed for the murder of a gangland boss. Also a particularly scary one, when the villains were a Chinese called Li Chang and Max, a Frenchman. Both met a very sticky end.

But I must confess that being of tender years at the time I sometimes "chickened out" of hearing all the last episode because the death screams were so realistic!

Yours sincerely,

KEITH HOWARD (Harrow)

AN EAGLE WORDSEARCH

compiled by David Gould

Cross through the words, which may be in any direction, as you find them. The remaining letters spell out the title of a Jack o'Lantern serial.

U	G	N	I	X	R	I	E
M	R	S	U	B	M	I	N
A	A	B	A	R	K	E	R
R	L	M	U	D	E	F	E
T	G	V	A	R	A	H	V
I	R	O	R	M	T	L	A
N	U	I	F	E	I	O	T
E	B	E	O	H	P	A	S

1. First name of "Tiger" Steele's artist.
2. Friendly South American Indian in 'The Quest for the Green Opal'.
3. A 'Dan Dare' project.
4. Atlantine cadet.
5. ------ Bill, in 'Plot Against the World'.
6. Legion deserter "Tiger" -----
7. 1960 Exhibition Director Peter.
8. Bimberg's favourite expression.
9. A moon of Saturn.
10. Edward was the first name of this MA and LLD.

Solution to previous Eagle Wordsearch (*ET* Vol 24 No 2): Reign of the Robots

Vol. 3 No. 71 Week ending September 24, 1938

Modern Wonder

TWOPENCE
EVERY WEDNESDAY

LATEST EXPRESS LOCO

Duchess of Gloucester

Five of these streamlined 4-6-2 locomotives have just been completed at Crewe for the LMS and are called the "Duchess" class.

Five similar engines have also been constructed, but are non-streamlined

1. Boiler
2. Fire tubes
3. Superheater boiler tubes
4. Superheater steam pipes
5. Superheater header
6. Superheater steam pipe to cylinders
7. Chimney cowling
8. Fire-box door
9. Streamlined outer casing
10. Blast pipe
11. 11A. Exhaust pipes from outside cylinders
12. Exhaust pipe from inside cylinders
13. Valve gear of inside cylinders
14. Inside cylinders
15. Steam pipe to inside cylinder
16. Main frame
17. Steam pipe to outside cylinder
18. Valve gear of outside cylinder
19. Outside cylinder

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THRILLING PRESENTATION TO ALL READERS
See Pages 14 and 15

Front cover (background): 'Luck of the Legion' by Geoffrey Bond and Martin Aitchison (*EAGLE* 29th May, 1953)
Rear cover: *Modern Wonder*, 24th Sept, 1938 - illustration by L Ashwell Wood
Eagle Times design/DTP layout: Will Grenham